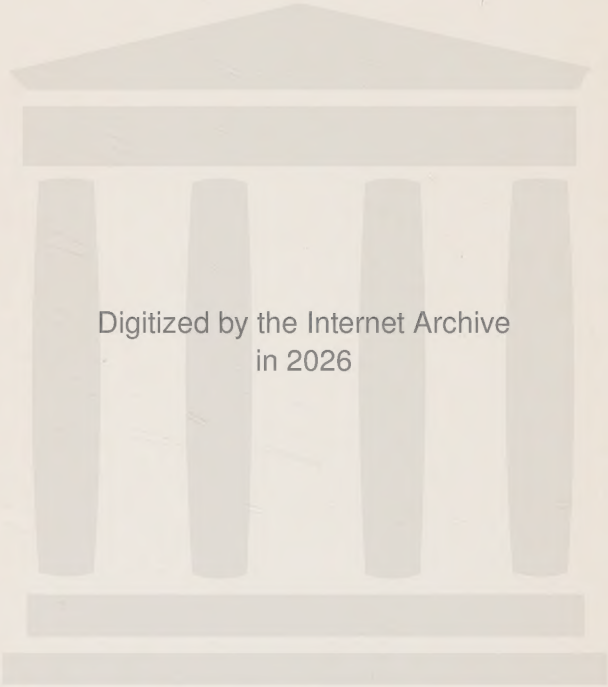
The LITURGICAL SACRIFICE OF THE NEW LAW

KRAMP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THE LITURGICAL SACRIFICE OF THE NEW LAW

BY THE

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INTRODUCTORY

The liturgy of the Church enshrines rich treasures of Catholic doctrine and practise. In particular the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, instituted by Christ himself, and the added details of its ritual, established by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, are replete with profound and practical religious thought, tending in an eminent degree to realize the supernatural purpose of mankind,—union with God by sanctification in the Church.

With these facts given, the ever growing interest in the liturgy which has developed among the faithful in all parts of the world is only a normal growth in their spiritual life. The signs of this interest are apparent in more frequent attendance at Mass on week-days, more frequent Communions, numerous translations of the Missal, the use of the Missal as a mass-book, Eucharistic congresses, and an extensive literature dealing with the liturgy. There is a widespread desire among the masses of the

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faithful to live the liturgical life of the Church more fully and intensively.

"Liturgical movements" have arisen in various parts of the world, and their influence is beginning to be felt in our own country. To be legitimate and in accord with the mind of the Church, liturgical endeavors of this kind cannot have the aim of supplanting approved devotions, nor of introducing esoteric tendencies into Catholic life. Their object must be to put the liturgical acts and prayers of the Church into the center of Christian life and practise under the direction of the Church authorities.

To be thus rightly valued and used, the liturgy needs only to be known and understood. Its supernatural appeal never fails to win and hold the attachment of a soul imbued with the faith. But the richness of its content makes a certain study of it necessary for its proper appreciation. In particular, the language of its ancient symbolism must be learned anew, for the modern world has long ceased to understand and use in a personal way these symbolical religious actions.

Hence the aim of the liturgical endeavors of the present day is to make the spirit and genius

of the liturgy and the meaning of its prayers and symbols more widely and fully known, and to win for them a paramount place in our personal and social religious life.

The liturgical prayers should occupy the first place among all prayers in the spiritual life of Catholics. These prayers are the most acceptable before God, for they are prayers of the Church, directed by the Holy Ghost, and are addressed to God in the name of our Saviour. The prayers of the liturgy are also the most useful of all prayers, because they enlighten the mind and touch the heart. They bring before our minds the principal mysteries of the life of Christ, of His Blessed Mother, and of the other Saints. By associating our prayers with those of the Church, we become united with God and with His Angels and Saints; our affections are purified from the dross of earth; our hearts are permeated with that charity which "never falleth away;" our personal prayer is transformed into public and universal prayer. Prayer should be directed first and foremost to the praise of God and the accomplishment of the designs of His Providence, in which abundant provision has been made for the perfection of every individual soul. Per-

sonal needs, or what one believes to be such, should always be conditioned upon this principle and kept in second place.

Father Kramp's book, "Opfergedanke und Messliturgie," of which nearly ten thousand copies have been sold in the four original editions, is in the service of these ideas. It aims to put the liturgy of the Mass into the center of Christian life by bringing home the meaning of the Christian sacrifice and its importance for the sanctification of our life of pilgrimage and for the attainment of our last end,—the one thing necessary.

Since the concept of sacrifice is fundamental for the correct understanding of the Mass and of its important place in Christian life, a preliminary chapter deals with this subject. The ideas set forth in it have been established at length by Father Kramp in a research monograph, entitled "Die Opferanschauungen der römischen Messliturgie" (2 ed., 1924, Ratisbon, Pustet) to which readers desiring a complete proof of this doctrine of sacrifice are referred. The relation of the Sacrifice of the Mass to that of the Last Supper and that of the Cross is explained, because without this knowledge a true understanding of the Mass cannot

be had. Special stress has been placed on the fact that holy Communion is a sacrificial repast, and, therefore, should be received in Mass, if at all possible. It is an integral part of the Sacrifice, not a separate devotion, however sacred. The final chapter shows that the offering of the holy Sacrifice is the principal act of the virtue of religion, and that holy Communion is our chief means of sanctification.

As this book is an explanation, not an investigation, the author's method of approaching his subject is not that of a coldly disinterested scholar. It joins the trembling reverence of faith with due regard for the light which theology and history project upon the liturgy, recognizing in the prayers and actions of the Christian Sacrifice the heart-beat of a thousand generations of Saints, who lived the ideas expressed in the liturgy.

Fortescue's translation of the Missal was utilized for the English version with the kind permission of Messrs. Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, but some deviations from its text were made, partly by substituting more specific terms, and partly by incorporating the results of recent research. The decrees of the Council of Trent are quoted in Waterworth's transla-

tion (London, 1848). New matter by the author, not contained in the original editions, will be found in Chapter I, 3. The author has read the English manuscript, but the translator alone is responsible for his work. May it contribute to prosper the cause of the Church and to foster true Christian piety.

L. F. M.

Columbus, Ohio,
October, 1925.

THE LITURGICAL SACRIFICE OF THE NEW LAW

CHAPTER I. THE IDEAS UNDERLYING THE CUSTOM OF SACRIFICE

I. SACRIFICE IN GENERAL

Sacrifice, like prayer, is found in the very beginning of human history. The elimination of sacrifice from private and public life was the work of modern atheism. Yet it remains true to-day what Saint Augustine says:—that there is no people either of the past or present, that does not offer sacrifices.

The Custom of Sacrifice

The *forms* of sacrifice are as varied as its practise is extensive, for men have always transferred their national characteristics to their gods. Since man's representation, and in

part his concept of God, are of necessity anthropomorphic,—theology teaches that our knowledge of God is analogous and imperfect, —the idea of God in the course of human history has been obscured often by crude and naturalistic, and sometimes by perverted and unworthy traits.

Owing to the inter-relation of the national traits of a people and its idea of God, the intercourse between God and man, which appears always and everywhere, though not exclusively, in the form of sacrifice, usually reflects the national characteristics of a people and its gods.

The Romans, being deeply imbued with the importance of law and order, regarded the scrupulously exact observance of the divinely willed outward ceremonial as the principal element of sacrifice. The Greeks, who were given to the gay enjoyment of life, sacrificed to the banqueting gods on Mount Olympus savory viands and enjoyable gifts in the course of festive pageants. At the end of a military campaign the cruel and savage Aztecs tore the heart from the body of a captive in the course of a sacrifice and so rejoiced their bloodthirsty gods. In the highly spiritualized religion of the Parsees the priest, clothed in resplendent

white, nourished the sacred flame,—the symbol of God, light, and purity,—with sweet-smelling sandalwood. The Brahman devotee of Kali, the cruel goddess of anger, slaughtered a goat and bathed the image of the goddess in its blood. Among the Hindus the anxious housewife offered rice and sweets to the household gods. King Mesa, in a time of danger, sacrificed his son and heir. Upon the death of the chieftain in certain negro tribes his retainers are killed by way of a sacrifice, lest he lack a suitable retinue when he is received among the gods.

Abhorrent as human sacrifice appears to us to-day, it has been practised even among civilized peoples. It was not unknown among the Greeks and Romans. In Athens it was customary to maintain year for year a poor abandoned man and woman and to sacrifice them at the feast of the Thargelia. The victims were hung with figs, scourged out of the city in solemn procession, and either cast from a rock, or burned alive and their ashes thrown into the sea. It is well known that young girls were sacrificed, or offered themselves of their own accord, in order to avert public disaster. In ancient Rome it was cus-

tomary to offer a double sacrifice, consisting of a man and a woman of some tribe (*e. g.*, Greeks or Gauls) from which mischief was feared. The Biblical narratives of Jephte's sacrifice of his daughter and the sacrifice of Abraham are glimpses of a civilization in which human sacrifices were not unknown.

The various kinds of sacrifices are too numerous even to be summarized here.

The *motives* of sacrifice are equally extensive. They include the confession and expiation of sin, the intention of sharing one's goods with the deity, the desire of rendering a service to God and thereby securing welfare of soul and body for oneself and for others, and the expression of reverence, praise, and thanksgiving.

Expiation is not the motive of all sacrifices, for many are of a joyful character, and some even over-step the bounds of morality. The Old Testament ordinances regarding the holocaust, which represented a complete repast prepared for Jahve, consisting of meat, meal, wine, sweet-smelling herbs, and resins, and the ordinances concerning the peace-offering, which is conceived as a sacrifice of friendship followed by a repast, do not contain the motive of expiation.

Bloody sacrifices play an important part in the religion of nearly all peoples, since blood, regarded as the seat of life, was thought to be the best part of the victim; but even in these sacrifices the idea of expiation is often excluded. Such is the case in the sacrifice of a captive of war among the Aztecs mentioned above. Another case in point is the spring sacrifice of Hindu peasants, for which a girl was kidnapped and nurtured until maturity. On the feast of the Goddess of the soil, the victim was bound fast to a tree, and pieces of living flesh were cut from her, which, streaming with blood, were placed in the ground. In these and many other sacrifices there is no motive of expiation, but a terribly misguided will to render service to the deity.

The *external ritual* of sacrifice is as varied as its nature and the motives that inspire it.

One element is common to all rituals. Whenever a sacrifice is intended to be more than a mere votive offering, the object sacrificed, be it grain, an animal, or a human being, is prepared to be consumed as a meal, which is to be not only a source of physical strength, but also a means of spiritual power and its actual communication.

The objects sacrificed are foods and other means of enjoyment. Whatever sustains and intensifies human life and adds to its enjoyment, is sacrificed to the deity in the state in which it is commonly used by man. A striking illustration of this practise is found in a group of wax figures in a pagoda at Tchifu in North Shantung. Several women carrying sacrificial gifts approach the image of the god, before which another woman is preparing a meal from these gifts, while another hands the repast to the idol.[1]

Similar instances are found everywhere. Perfumed resin is burned in the form of incense. Grain is ground and given to the deity in the form of bread, cake, etc. Animals are slaughtered and cut up; the meat is washed, seasoned, cooked, and poured out in the holy place together with its juice (cf. the sacrifice of Gideon in Judges vi), or burned with sweet-smelling herbs and wafted heavenward in the form of sacrificial odor with libations of wine or oil.

The deity's acceptance of the sacrifice is described in corresponding images and terms. Holy Writ says of the very first sacrifice offered

[1] *Katholische Missionen,* 1913/1914, p. 323.

after the Deluge: "And Noë built an altar unto the Lord, and taking of all cattle and fowls that were clean, offered holocausts upon the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor and said, 'I will no more curse the earth. . . .'" (Gen. viii, 20 f.)

In connection with sacrifice the Old Testament uniformly speaks of God after the manner of a human being: the Hebrews prepare a meal for Jahve; the sweet odor of sacrifice ascends to him, and He graciously accepts it. Holy Writ speaks of the "bread of God" (Lev. xxi, 6; Num. xxviii, 2) and of the "food made by fire unto Jahve" (Num. xxviii, 2; Lev. iii, 11).

As the Greeks and the Romans offered the flower of the cup to their gods, so the Israelites during their wanderings in the desert were obliged to bring the blood of every slaughtered animal to the tabernacle and to sacrifice it as the part reserved for Jahve.

The General Notion of Sacrifice

Sacrificing is an everyday occurrence in the history of mankind; in pagan countries it is practised to the present day. But the various kinds and rites of sacrifice differ so much that

it is difficult to ascertain the idea which inwardly inspires the sacrificing priest, communicates itself to every form of sacrifice, and dominates and directs the development of the whole sacrificial action. It is difficult to seize the essential elements amid this variety of forms.

Hence the many different *theories of sacrifice,* devised for the purpose of determining the basic idea underlying all sacrifices, or at least certain groups of them, and thus formulating and establishing the true scientific concept of sacrifice. Many general theories of sacrifice are manifestly untenable for the simple reason that they cannot be applied to all sacrifices.

The sacrificial repast is not the essence of sacrifice, for many sacrifices lack this feature. Nor is the essence of sacrifice to be found in the mere destruction of the sacrificial gifts, for the sacrificial element of incense was always held to consist in the aromatic smoke ascending to God, not in the destruction of the grains; furthermore, the showbreads in the Temple were a true sacrifice, even though they were not destroyed.

What is common to all sacrifices is the ele-

ment of *oblation, i. e.,* the physical and spiritual offering of a gift to the deity.

Sacrifice is offered *to the deity,* for as St. Augustine says, no man ever sacrifices to any being whom he does not know or believe to be God.

The physical presentation of the sacrifice consists in dedicating the object to God, giving it into His possession.

In most sacrifices the preparation of the sacrificial gifts plays an important part. Catholic theologians hold widely divergent views regarding the nature and purpose of this so-called sacrificial change. Scholars who have investigated the religious customs of various nations are fairly well agreed to-day that the sacrificial change consists in preparing a means of spiritual, or usually physical nourishment, such as a meal, a beverage, or a table luxury, which is completely in keeping with the human image under which men represent the deity. This explanation of sacrificial change, which was adopted by St. Thomas,[2] is better adapted than any other to clear up sacrificial customs and their meaning. Man conceives God after the

[2] S. Th. 2a, II, 81, 7, ad 3; 1, II, 102, 3.

manner of a human being, and just as an invitation to table is considered the highest honor among men, so man confers the highest honor upon God by preparing a repast and offering it to Him for his enjoyment.

While, therefore, opinions regarding the nature of the sacrificial change differ, practically all scholars are agreed that oblation to the deity is essential to sacrifice. The Catholic Church officially adopted this view at the Council of Trent.

The *presentation and offering* of the sacrificial gift expressly prepared for the purpose of the sacrifice, *constitutes the very essence of the sacrificial act.*

The change of meaning which the last few centuries have wrought in the term "sacrifice" has accustomed us to associate it with the idea of renunciation and destruction, and almost to lose sight of its essential and fundamental element. And yet we are all familiar from everyday experience with this fundamental element of giving, handing, presenting, which, in relation to God, is called "sacrificing."

The thought of the sacrificer will not progress beyond this stage so long as he considers

the deity as living a life similar to that of man, requiring food and drink, even though they be celestial nectar and ambrosia. This limitation of the idea of sacrifice will persist the more firmly if the gods are considered as depending upon the gifts of man, suffering hunger and thirst unless enough sacrifices are offered.

Wherever it is recognized that God is above human needs, wherever He is known and conceived in some manner as a spirit, sacrifice is invested with a *symbolical character.*

Man desiring to make a gift to God, tenders Him the best things he has, in the form and manner customary among men,—not with the intention of nourishing the deity, but for the purpose of paying homage to God, acknowledging Him as the supreme Lord and Father to whom reverence and love are due, just as dutiful children offer gifts to their father on his birthday, not as if he had need of them, but to honor him by deeds more than by words.

Grimm has, therefore, rightly distinguished sacrifice from prayer and defined it as *"a gift with prayer."* Thus a sacrifice is a *gift of homage* offered to God as the sovereign Lord of creation. In this sense the Psalmist makes

Jahve say (Ps. xlix, 7 ff.): "I am God, thy God! . . . I will not take bullocks out of thy house, nor bucks out of thy flocks; for all the beasts of the forest are mine, and all the cattle of the mountains by the thousands. I know all the birds of the mountains, and all that moves in the fields is under my hand. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and all it contains. Do I eat the flesh of bullocks, or drink the blood of bucks? Offer thanks in sacrifice to God, and thus wilt thou fulfill thy vows to the Most High. Call upon me in the day of distress; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." In other words, God wishes to have sacrifice considered not as a mere material gift, but as an act of homage by which His excellence is acknowledged and He is thanked and petitioned for favors. So long as a sacrifice lacks this symbolic character, it is an aberration; but if the sacrificial gift is offered as an expression of interior reverence, gratitude, and love, it is worthy of God.

Despite all its anthropomorphisms in connection with sacrifice, the Old Testament presupposes this symbolism. Jahve needs nothing; offering Him food and drink is merely a sym-

bolic way of honoring Him. This fact is acknowledged even by non-Catholic scholars.[3]

When man's knowledge of God and of his relation to God has progressed to the extent that he recognizes God as the source, the sustaining principle, and the purpose of human life, and if he realizes the necessity of devoting all his possessions and especially himself to the service of God, a new symbolic value attaches to his sacrifices. The sacrifice becomes a *symbol of the sacrificer.* He offers to the author of his life a gift, but means himself. He gives of his possession, of the things which sustain his life and existence; but this act is only a means of expressing the devotion of his own life and existence to God; it is a symbol of himself. This gift, too, is not made with the intention of enriching the Lord, but in testimony of man's interior reverence, adoration, and submissiveness to Him.

It is difficult to determine in individual instances whether the sacrificial gift is intended to symbolize the sacrificer. In the extant prayers of the Babylonian sacrifice of expiation this symbolism is clearly expressed: man ac-

[3] Cfr. R. Kittel, *Studien zur hebr. Archäologie und Religionsgeschichte,* Leipsic, 1908, pp. 157–8.

knowledges before God that he deserves death for his sins and, desiring to obtain forgiveness, slaughters and offers to the deity a sheep instead of himself. The great Christian theologians clearly teach that all sacrifices have this symbolic meaning, though they usually expound this doctrine in connection with a text which mentions only the sacrifice of reconciliation, namely: "Thou desirest not the sacrifice of victims, else would I give it; but thou hast no pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (Ps. l, 18 f.).

We have now determined the *elements of sacrifice* in its broadest sense. It is a gift closely connected with human life, offered to God as the sovereign Lord. The act of offering this gift is the outward sign of an interior sentiment of love and reverence for God. In a word, the gift which is offered symbolizes the sacrificing person.

The *sacrificial rite* varies as widely as sacrifice itself. A sacrifice is a sign and a symbol. The interior act of the will by which it is inspired may find outward expression in many ways, as by movements, gestures, glances, speech, prayer, etc. There are many rites which are undoubtedly sacrificial, though we

cannot distinguish them from profane actions. Hence the outward act of sacrificial oblation cannot be limited to certain definite actions, least of all in those cases in which the sacrifice possesses extraordinary characteristics throughout, as in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In the Old Testament, too, there are sacrifices in which it is difficult to determine the external act of oblation, *e. g.,* the sacrifice of Melchisedech, that of the showbreads, etc.

Sacrifice and Religion

From these considerations it is apparent why every *religion* is obliged to attach such great importance to the preserving of its sacrificial worship, which reveals its entire doctrine about God and the fundamental relation of the individual believer and the society of believers to God, as an acknowledged principle of religion.

A Parsee, who sacrifices not to his own god, the god of fire, but to Brahma, denies his faith and condemns his previous religious life. More than this, he acknowledges the Hindu religion as true by his act and gives testimony to the doctrines which govern the Hindu in his

relation to the Supreme Being. Hence the surprising tenacity with which nations cling to their sacrificial rites. Hence the prudence of the statesmen of ancient Rome, who not only tolerated and respected the religious customs of subjugated peoples, but even went so far as to adopt them.

Now we can understand the uncompromising attitude of the youthful Church of Christ in not allowing her members, even for show, to throw a few grains of incense into the fire of pagan sacrifice. Had she acted otherwise, the Church would have repudiated herself.

Sacrifice, therefore, is at once the most sublime and the most profound exercise of religion. It is an epitome of its teaching and at the same time the most concise manner of expressing its characteristics. All its sublime and beautiful doctrines about God, man, and their mutual relations are crystallized in its various kinds of sacrifice and in their forms, ceremonies, and prayers.

If a religion is devoid of all sacrifice, this is prima facie evidence that it has no definite views regarding God and man, in fact, that it is no religion at all.

Protestantism affords a tragic proof of this

statement. By granting to its adherents freedom of doctrinal investigation, it granted freedom of faith, which is incompatible with sacrifice. Luther's contempt for the Sacrifice of the Mass, which is unintelligible to-day, was a sorry dirge sung at the grave of the so-called Reformation, which began with half a dozen new creeds, and to-day practically has none.

Sacrifice is religion's "pearl of great price." Filled with this conviction, the *Church* has always treasured and guarded the Mass. She took into her service all the arts, crafts, and sciences and used their productions to embellish her Sacrifice. Generation after generation she causes entire religious orders to consecrate themselves primarily to the sacred liturgy, which surrounds the jewel of her sacrifice like a setting of precious stones. What care has she not lavished upon the liturgy of the Mass! She did it because she knew and knows that she guards and in a mysterious way continues the one and only sacrifice of the redemption of mankind.

II. THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

Sacrifice is the most profound and intense exercise of religion. Hence it is not surprising

that *Christ,* as it were, affixed His signature in the form of a sacrifice to the charter by which He founded His religion.

According to St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, the manifold sacrificial rites of the Old Testament were primarily intended to be figures of this one sacrifice. They were, so to say, the spectrum of this one sun, unfolding its incomprehensibly rich content.

Christ put His whole life into the service of this one sacrifice: "Wherefore he saith when he cometh into the world, 'Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast prepared for me'" (Heb. x, 5). This "body" is the human nature of Christ, the most precious good which humanity ever termed its own, and consequently the most valuable gift which could be offered as a sacrifice to God. The sacrificing priest was no less a person than the God-Man, whose dignity and exalted character make Him the natural head of the human race. Compared with His sacrifice, all the oblations of men were but fleeting shadows, for "we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x, 10).

In this sacrifice offered by Christ, not only the effect, but also the act itself immeasurably

transcends all other sacrifices. By offering sacrifice, man dedicates himself to God by an act of the will, which is externally manifested by the symbolic presentation of a gift. A more perfect outward expression of his consecration to God is beyond the power of man; for if he were to sacrifice himself physically, he would act contrary to the divine will and thereby estrange himself from God, rather than effect a union with Him. Christ, however, had the power and the right to dispose freely of His life: "I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This commandment have I received from my Father" (John x, 17 f.). When He offers His life to the Father, therefore, His sacrifice is not merely a symbol, it is a reality. Yet it is also a symbol; for since Christ is the Head of the human race, He offers all mankind by offering Himself, the symbol of all. Thus we all are sacrificed, consecrated, and dedicated to God in Christ. Through His sacrifice we are redeemed, reconciled, and made holy.

Wherein did the sacrifice of Christ consist? Occasionally we read that the sacrifice of

Christ began at His birth, since His whole life was a true sacrifice. In this statement "sacrifice" is taken in the wider sense of renunciation, deprivation, waiver, an interpretation of the term which became current in the eighteenth century and stresses only one aspect of sacrifice.

The death of a human being, even though it be voluntary, is a sacrifice only in a figurative sense. The same is true of the death of Christ; considered in itself alone, it is not adequately His sacrifice.

The external act of offering a visible gift is a primary and essential requisite of sacrifice. In the Sacrifice of the Cross this gift is the human nature of Christ. The death of the Lord, therefore, can be only the sacrificial change which takes place in the course of the sacrificial action. In view of the teaching of St. Paul there can be no doubt that our Lord performed an external act of oblation on the Cross. The only question is when He did so. According to some theologians that act is contained in the words He spoke at the Last Supper: "This is my body, *which is given for you*"; "this is my blood of the new testament, which *shall be shed* for you and for many." Others hold that it is found in His last words:

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Any external sign on the part of Christ sufficed for the oblation.

The act by which Christ redeemed the world, therefore, was a true sacrifice, for by it He offered Himself to the Father as a token of reverence and love, an act of surrender to God, associated with the gradual separation of His human nature from all that was dear to it.

St. Matthew has described this separation with fearful consistency: one of the Apostles betrays Christ; the others desert Him; their leader denies Him. The Jewish tribunal twice condemns Him; the Roman court abandons Him. The people reject Him and clamor for His blood; the soldiers mock Him; suspended between heaven and earth, He is deprived of all consolation. Lest His desertion and surrender be in any way incomplete, even interior consolation fails Him: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

This complete surrender of Himself to the Father, increasing according to human estimation with the aggravation of His sufferings, goes parallel with His violent separation from the world brought on by external causes. The more His human nature ceases to belong to it-

self, the more it passes into the possession of the Father, in intention and reality. It is significant that, according to St. Luke, the last words of Christ expressed the surrender of His life to God: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. xxiii, 46). The Father accepted the gift; He received Christ as the Head of the human race into the Holy of Holies in Heaven and placed Him at His right hand (Heb. viii and ix).

The Sacrifice of the Cross is the charter of the Christian religion. Established by a sacrifice, it knows no higher religious act than sacrifice. What Christ did for each individual, each should realize in himself; what He did for society, society should fulfill in itself. Participation in the Christian sacrifice is not left to the free choice of the individual. Christ instituted this sacrifice in order that all should take part in it, and in consequence of the carelessness of many of her children, the Church has made attendance at Mass a grave obligation.

Such an obligation is not necessary to bring about the attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of him who possesses a true understanding of human nature and an insight into the ways of

grace and of salvation. Christ's parable of the vine and its branches, and the words of St. Paul regarding the body of which Christ is the Head and we are the members, are not meaningless comparisons, but express a living reality, particularly in regard to the Christian sacrifice, in which Christ communicates supernatural life to the faithful, and infuses supernatural light into the mind and recruiting power into the will, both of the individual and of the whole Christian community. In this sense the sacrifice of Christ and its life-giving grace do not belong to the past, but are present on our altars in order to produce for everyone the fruits of supernatural life. Even to-day the Vine, which is Christ, desires to grow from the altar and to bring forth magnificent blossoms and fruits.

A pagan knows the motive which brings him to his altars on festive days; he considers it a matter of course that all the members of his cult profess their god at his altar and dedicate themselves to him by means of sacred symbols. Shall we Christians, who glory in the possession of that which they desire with great longing, be outdone by them in the knowledge and acknowledgment of God?

III. THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

In the catechism of the Council of Trent, which for several centuries has been the parish priests' official text for instructing the faithful, the question as to the sacrificial character of the Eucharist is answered, and the following words are appended: "Pastors should explain this mystery carefully, so that when the faithful assemble for divine worship, they may learn to assist at the Holy Sacrifice intelligently, attentively, and reverently." [4] In the eighth chapter of its twenty-second session the same Council had previously expressed itself in similar terms.

A glance at the ascetic and homiletic literature published since the Council of Trent shows that not even moderate demands in this matter are duly met. The sublime character of the Mass, its salutary effects, its relation to the Sacrifice of the Cross, etc., are expounded; but the question which the Catechism of the Council has in view in the passage quoted is not answered; namely, Why is the Mass a sacrifice? And why is it the sacrifice proper to the New Covenant?

[4] Pt. II, ch. 4, q. 54.

The reason for this silence most probably lies in the lively discussions about the general concept of sacrifice and its applicability to the Mass, which followed the Council of Trent. These discussions centered about two questions: (1) The purpose for which men offer sacrifice, and (2) the nature of the sacrificial change, which takes place in all sacrifices properly so-called.

In view of what we have previously said we shall not wonder at these discussions, for widely divergent views are current on both these questions. Besides, Catholic theologians occasionally went different ways in seeking to refute the Protestant objections raised against the sacrificial character of the Mass. Finally, the Sacrifice of the Mass, besides certain traits common to other sacrifices, also possesses a series of characteristics which are proper to itself, and which make comparisons with other sacrifices and explanations by parallels difficult, if not impossible. The Roman Catechism speaks of a "mystery" to be explained in this connection.

By searching for the best explanation, much good material was lost. In endeavoring to lay bare the most delicate fibers of the structure of

sacrifice, which after all can interest only the learned, these theologians omitted to bring its mighty framework before the eyes of the faithful, nay, themselves overlooked it.

As against these theories, the Roman Catechism restricts itself to the element of oblation (*offerre*), which is essential to all sacrifices, and explains the sacrificial character of the Eucharist as follows: "This sacrament is not only a treasure of divine love and grace; it has another aspect, enabling us to thank God in deed for the measureless benefits He has conferred upon us." In these words the idea of offering is clearly marked off by contrasting God's gifts to us with the service we render Him in return. God gives to us in the sacrament, and we give to Him in the sacrifice. "The whole significance of the sacrifice lies in the fact that it is offered."

Objectively, a sacrifice is a gift offered to God for the purpose of honoring Him as the supreme being. This gift is a symbol of the person who sacrifices, and its oblation symbolizes that person's offering of himself. Furthermore, a sacrifice in the strict sense implies the change or conversion of the sacrificial gift in order to express its symbolic meaning.

The so-called "destruction theory," which grew out of the doctrinal controversies with Protestants and the cultural conditions of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, requires the destruction of the sacrificial gift in order to verify the idea of a true sacrifice. According to this view the destruction of the sacrificial gift in the Eucharistic sacrifice consists in an imitative representation of the death of Christ.

The theologians who proposed this theory were swayed by juridical considerations. The idea of justice dominates their reasoning. They regard God after the manner of an autocratic ruler of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and describe the relation of subject to sovereign by means of the term *"servus."*

Wherever the standard of strict justice is applied to the relation between God, who is holy, and man, who is a sinful creature, man must realize that he is weighed down with guilt and deserving of punishment. Thus it comes that the theory of sacrifice is strongly influenced by the idea of expiation and expiatory acts. The practical purpose of killing a sacrificial animal, according to this school, is the symbolic expression of the fact that man deserves death in consequence of his sins and vi-

cariously takes his own life by destroying that of the sacrificial victim.

A deep sense of gravity and a certain sentiment of fear pervade this view of sacrifice, and almost involuntarily it recalls the publican in the Temple, who dared not approach the dwelling-place of God, nor even to raise his eyes, but in the bitterness of his heart ventured only to strike his breast and pray, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner."

It would exceed the scope of this work even to list the attempts which have been made during the last four centuries by adherents of this theory to show why the Mass is a true sacrifice. It is sufficient to note that none of the proposed answers has found general acceptance. The fact that almost the entire Catholic literature of our day, scientific and ascetical, in as far as it deals with sacrifice in general, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the liturgy of the Mass, is under the influence of these views, cannot astonish us; for the particulars in which they differ are as important as the general outlines in which they agree.

In explaining the liturgy of the Mass, it is important to note the fact that, though many explanations of the Mass prayers and cere-

monies have been put forth during the period in which the theories mentioned above have held sway, yet this period has produced no explanation of the Mass which considers the liturgy as a whole. The ultimate reason of this failure lies in the fact that the liturgy is built up on a wider conception of sacrifice than those we have noticed and cannot be explained in any other way. This consideration also enables us to understand why there are so many correct explanations of the liturgy in a period in which the true concept of sacrifice was generally held.

The following are the fundamental ideas underlying the older explanations of the liturgy. They embody all that is contained in the juridical conception of sacrifice; but while keeping it well in view, they proceed from deeper and wider considerations of the nature of sacrifice. History teaches us that the concept of sacrifice which was built up on the idea of destruction and renunciation was an outgrowth of the cultural environment of recent times, and originated by separating and isolating certain elements of the concept of sacrifice from the whole and then identifying them with it.[5]

[5] Cp. Kramp, *Die Opferanschauungen der römischen Messliturgie*, 2 ed., Ch. 4.

Votive gifts and sacrifices are offered to honor God as the Supreme Being, the Creator of the world, the Giver of all good things, the Source and Sustainer of life, the end and aim of human existence, the happiness of man in time and eternity. Man's purpose is to know, to serve, and to love God. The *service* of God finds its highest expression in love, and love seeks to manifest itself by acts of affectionate *service.* Man's goal is to glorify God by union with Him. This union is effected on earth by restoring its sacred bond if it has been broken, and by conforming one's mind and will to God; in Heaven by the beatific vision and love of God and a mutual dedication of each to each.

This idea that man's purpose is to honor God by uniting himself with Him dominates the notion of sacrifice and determines the entire course of the sacrificial action.

The sacrificial gift is offered to God, and nothing is left undone to give expression to the transfer of the gift to God and its union with Him. Accordingly the sacrificial change or conversion effects, not a destruction of the gift, but a more complete and perfect transfer of it to God. The killing of the sacrificial victim and the burning of its flesh symbolize man's

infirmity and guilt, the fact that he deserves death, and his desire to atone; but this does not complete the sacrifice, for the burning of the gift is only a transitional stage. The sacrificial victim and the sacrificer whom it symbolizes, are to ascend to God as the pleasing smoke of sacrifice, and God is asked to accept this gift. Hence the constantly recurring idea of preparing a "meal" for God. The sacrificial gift is prepared as food for human consumption, and in this form it is finally offered to God. In the sacrifice of incense the person who offers it sets fire to the incense. The burning of the grains is the sacrificial conversion. The sacrificer ascends to God, so to speak, with the perfume of the incense and unites himself with God, his inner sentiments of devotion having constituted him a gift pleasing to God.

The renouncement of a gift, of life, and of self is the point of departure in the sacrificial action and in the symbol; but man renounces himself only in order to regain a more perfect self in union with God. There may and should be expiation in this act, but "justice and peace have kissed each other"; the loving union with God, which was lost, has been restored.

There is no greater proof of friendship and

love, especially in the Orient, than participation in a common meal. Thus he who offers a sacrifice shows God the highest honor and love by preparing a feast for Him, placing it before Him, and inviting Him to share it. This physical and spiritual offering of food as a gift of honor constitutes the essence of sacrifice.

But there is an additional element in sacrifice. Union implies the exchange and communication of goods. Holiness is proper to God, and whatever belongs to Him, or is near to Him, is considered holy. Persons and things consecrated to God are holy. When a man dedicates himself to God by offering sacrifice, he seeks and obtains holiness. The gift which is offered to God and becomes His own is holy. Whatever the nature of the sacrificial conversion may be in the individual sacrifice, it consecrates and sanctifies the sacrificial gift; and by reason of its symbolical character it confers holiness upon the sacrificing person. *The entire sacrificial action is dominated by the idea of consecration and devotion to God, and of sanctification and union with Him.*

St. Thomas teaches that Christ was sanctified in a special manner when He offered Himself to God in life and in death to the extent of be-

coming united with Him in the form of a sacrificial gift. According to St. Paul (Epistle to the Hebrews) Christ entered into the Holy of Holies in Heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father: He sanctifying Himself and those for whom He had offered Himself as a sacrifice.

All sacrifices are offered to bring about this effect. The sacrificing person desires to elevate and perfect himself, to become holy and united with God. The offering he makes brings him nearer to Heaven and is often characterized by rejoicing. He regards the dedication of himself and of his sacrificial gift to God as a privilege rather than as an act of renunciation and relinquishment. He is animated by joyful sentiments: "In the simplicity of my heart I have joyfully offered all these things" (1 Par. 9, 17). The holiness he seeks to attain by means of his sacrifice absorbs his attention more than the loss of the gift he offers; he considers the best and most valuable gift as hardly good enough for his beloved Lord.

To recapitulate: Sacrifice consists in offering a gift to God. In the process of being offered this gift is so changed as to become more worthy of and acceptable to God. After

being prepared and consecrated, it is definitively given to God. This is the external aspect of sacrifice, its outward symbol.

According to its inner aspect thus outwardly symbolized, the sacrificial gift is a sign by which man gives himself to God. The offering of the gift signifies the sacrificer's oblation of himself. The preparation and consecration of the gift is the expression of the interior preparation of the sacrificer, of his betterment, perfection, and sanctification. The final offering of the prepared gift is the expression of the definitive oblation to God of the soul thus prepared, in order to do honor to God and to become united with Him.

Sacrifice may, therefore, be defined as the offering of a gift, which is consecrated to God by being sanctified through physical change, symbolizing man's personal oblation and consecration to God.

It is a dogmatic truth that Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine, is the proper sacrificial gift offered in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Through the consecration the Eucharistic Christ becomes present upon our altars.

Since Christ is now glorified and therefore impassible even according to His human nature,

He cannot be subject to physical change. It follows that the Eucharistic Christ is a sacrificial gift in which the sacrificial change has already been wrought. He has gone forth from the sacrificial change effected in our sacrificial gifts by means of a physical and sanctifying conversion. This change is the consecration of the bread and wine, by which they have been converted into the Eucharistic Christ. The consecration, therefore, is the external sign under which Christ is offered to the Father upon the altar under the appearances of bread and wine. Hence the general definition of sacrifice may be applied to the Sacrifice of the Mass without difficulty or modification. Bread and wine, the gifts which the priest offers to God, in the course of the sacrificial action are sanctified and physically changed into the body and blood of Christ and in this state are offered to God as the Eucharistic Christ.

Is it true that the Sacrifice of the Mass *renews the Sacrifice of the Cross?* In this proposition two things must be distinguished. The relation of the Sacrifice of the Mass to that of the Cross does not figure in the question as to how the general concept of sacrifice is verified in the Mass. In other words, the ques-

tion why the Mass is a sacrifice *at all,* is not answered by replying that it represents in some manner the death of Christ, but rather by pointing out that *Christ,* who issues from the sacrificial conversion, is *offered* to God.

The relation of the Sacrifice of the Mass to that of the Cross comes into consideration only in connection with the further question, why the *Mass* is the sacrifice *proper* to the New Covenant. This question is answered by the reply that Christ, as offered in the Mass, is the sacrificial gift of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The relation of the Mass to the Sacrifice of the Cross follows from the special character of our sacrificial gift and, therefore, is just as essential to the Mass as the offering of Christ in itself. This relation is as real as the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Therefore the Mass renews the Sacrifice of the Cross because, and in so far as, Christ, the sacrificial gift of the Sacrifice of the Cross, is offered again. The act of offering Christ is renewed, but not the manner in which He was offered on Calvary.

According to the foregoing exposition the repeated offering of the same sacrificial gift is impossible if it is to include a repetition of its sacrificial conversion. For by means of the

latter the gift is presented to God and sanctified, and a second offering of this nature would therefore require the previous expropriation and desecration of the gift, which in the present case is impossible.

Hence the teaching of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, that Christ was offered only once by the sacrificial change and sanctification which took place on the Cross, is self-evident. For the glorified Christ cannot undergo any further change, physical or otherwise, nor can He lose the sacrificial consecration once received. Wherever He is, as St. Chrysostom teaches, He possesses the sacrificial consecration of Calvary, and wherever He appears, He is present as the sacrificial gift of the Sacrifice of the Cross. If Christ, therefore, becomes present as a sacrificial gift in the course of a sacrificial action, He is present as the sacrificial gift of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and as such is offered again (*re-praesentatur*) to God in the sacrifice which is being performed by the priest of the Church.

Some great theologians of the past go a step farther and say that the sacrificial conversion effected by the act of consecration renders present not only the sacrificial gift of the

Sacrifice of the Cross, but also its sacrificial *act*. Just as the substance of Christ is present in many places and in many parts of time by the miracle of the consecration, so Christ's act of oblation, which He once performed on the Cross, is multiplied according to place and time, thus becoming present in many places and in many parts of time. The act of consecration, therefore, makes the sacrificial act of the Sacrifice of the Cross present just as truly as it makes Christ present upon our altars as the sacrificial gift of the Mass.

Consequently we have in the Mass the profound mystery that the act of oblation, which begins on our altars with the Offertory, passes over and is received into the sacrificial act of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Our sacrificial gifts of bread and wine are changed into the true body of Christ, the sacrificial gift of Calvary; the sacrificers, priest and people, are incorporated into the mystical body of Christ, the sacrificer on Calvary; our sacrificial act is identified with Christ's own act of offering, the sacrificial act of Calvary. This is the doctrine of the numerical identity of the Sacrifice of the Mass with that of the Cross, with a purely local and temporal multiplication. The Mass

according to this view, is *a sacrifice* because it verifies the concept of sacrifice in general, independently of its relation to the Sacrifice of the Cross, but since it is *this* particular *sacrifice,* it is much more than a mere sacramental representation of that sacrifice, because it makes the Sacrifice of the Cross *truly* present again.

The liturgy originated and developed in a time when these views were common property of theologians and well known also to all the faithful. Hence it is not surprising to find in the liturgy a faithful presentation of them.

Considered in the light of these ideas, the liturgy is a closely knit organic structure, constructed according to a definite plan, but making allowance for poetic and artistic development.

CHAPTER II. THE MASS ACCORDING TO THE ROMAN MISSAL

I. THE PREPARATORY PART OF THE MASS

When everything has been prepared for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, the priest, standing at the foot of the altar, begins as follows:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then he recites the forty-second psalm alternately with the servers who represent the assembled faithful:

I will go to the altar of God.

To God, who is my joy from my youth.

Accord justice to me, Lord, and defend my cause against a wicked nation. Deliver me from the deceitful and wicked man.

For thou, Lord, art my strength. Why hast thou cast me off, and why do I wander about sorrowing, oppressed by the enemy?

Send forth thy light and thy faithfulness: let them lead me and bring me to thy holy mountain, even to thy dwelling place.

Then I will go to the altar of God; to God, who is my joy from my youth.

And I will sing thy praise upon my harp, God, my God. Why art thou cast down, my soul, and why dost thou agitate thyself within me?

Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, the salvation of my countenance and my God.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

I will go to the altar of God.

To God, who is my joy from my youth.

Then the Confiteor, or general confession of sins, is recited alternately by the priest and the servers:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Who made heaven and earth.

I confess to almighty God . . .

May Almighty God have mercy on thee, forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to life everlasting.

Amen.

I confess to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to thee, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed; through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech the Blessed Mary, ever virgin, blessed Michael the archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and thee, Father, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting.

Amen.

Thou shalt turn again, God, and quicken us.

And thy people shall rejoice in thee.

Show unto us, Lord, thy mercy.

And grant us thy salvation.

Lord, hear my prayer.

And let my cry come unto thee.

The Lord be with you.

And with thee.

The priest then goes up to the altar, saying the following prayer:

Let us pray. Take away from us our

iniquities, we beseech thee, Lord, that we may be worthy to enter with clean minds into the holy of holies. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bowing, with hands joined above the altar, he says:

We pray thee, Lord, by the merits of thy Saints (*here he kisses the so-called "grave" in the altar table, containing the relics of martyrs*), whose relics are here, and of all the Saints, that thou wouldst forgive me all my sins. Amen.

In the solemn High Mass the altar is now incensed. In other Masses the priest now goes to the epistle side and prays the Introit, *which is different every day. Then he returns to the middle of the altar and prays the* Kyrie *alternately with the faithful:*

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

In most Masses the Gloria is now said:

Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will.

We praise thee,
We bless thee,
We adore thee,
We glorify thee.

We give thee thanks for thy great glory.

Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father almighty.

Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For thou alone art holy,
Thou alone art Lord,
Thou alone art most high.

Jesus Christ with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The priest kisses the altar, turns toward the people, and says:

The Lord be with you.

And with thee.

He goes to the epistle side and according to the order of the day prays one or more collects, *or prayers of the Church assembled. The* Epistle *follows and is concluded with the words:* Thanks be to God, *spoken by the faithful. The* Gradual, *the Alleluia verse, and in a few Masses the Sequence, all differing each day, are then said. Then the priest, standing in the middle of the altar, prepares himself to read the* Gospel (*the glad tidings of God to men*), *praying:*

Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, who didst cleanse the lips of the prophet Isaias with a live coal; deign by thy gracious mercy so to cleanse me, that I may worthily proclaim thy holy Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, grant thy blessing.

May the Lord be in my heart and on my lips, that I may worthily and fitly proclaim His holy gospel. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

At the Gospel side the priest greets the people:

The Lord be with you.

And with thee.

Then He announces:

The continuation (*or* beginning) of the holy gospel according to *N.*

The faithful answer, Glory be to thee, O Lord.

He reads the Gospel. When he has finished, the faithful answer:

Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The priest kisses the Gospel and says in a subdued voice:

By the words of the holy Gospel may our sins be blotted out.

On Sundays, high feast-days, and in many other Masses priest and people now recite the Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten not made; one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven (*at the following words all kneel out of reverence*) and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was

made man. He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven. He sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and He will come again to judge the living and the dead; and His kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; who spoke through the prophets.

And one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

II. THE SACRIFICIAL PART OF THE MASS

The Lord be with you.

And with thee.

Let us pray.

After the Offertory *verse, which is different each day, the priest takes the paten with the sacrificial gift of* bread, *which he offers by holding it up, presenting it to God, and saying the prayer:*

Receive, holy Father, almighty, eternal God, this spotless gift, which I, thine unworthy servant, do offer unto thee, my God, living and true, for mine own countless sins, transgressions, and failings, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, living and dead; that it may avail both me and them for salvation unto life eternal. Amen.

Then, making a cross with the paten, he puts the host on the corporal, pours wine *into the chalice, blesses the water with a cross and the following prayer, and pours a few drops of water into the chalice.*

God, who in a marvelous manner didst dignify man's nature in creating it, and in a manner still more marvelous didst renew it; grant that by the mystery of this water and wine we may be made partakers of the divine nature of Him who condescended to share with us our human nature, our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son; who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Holding the chalice with both hands, he presents it to God with the words:

We offer to thee, O Lord, the chalice of sal-

vation, beseeching thy mercy that it may rise up with a sweet savor before thy divine majesty for our salvation and for that of the whole world. Amen.

He makes a cross with the chalice, puts it on the corporal, and covers it with the pall. With his hands joined over the altar, he bows a little and says:

By reason of our humble spirit and our contrite heart, let us be received by thee, Lord; and so may our sacrifice be offered up to thee to-day, that it may be pleasing to thee, Lord God.

Rising up, he stretches out his hands, lifts them up, and joins them. He lifts his eyes upwards, lowers them immediately, makes a cross over the sacrificial gifts, and says:

Come, thou that makest holy, almighty and eternal God, and bless this sacrifice, which is prepared for Thy Holy Name.

In the solemn High Mass the sacrificial gifts and the altar are now incensed. *First the priest blesses the incense with the prayer:*

By the intercession of the Blessed Archangel Michael, standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all His elect, may the Lord

deign to bless this incense and receive it for a sweet savor. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

He incenses the sacrificial gifts, saying:

Let this incense, which thou hast blessed, rise to thee, Lord, and let thy mercy come down upon us.

He incenses the altar, reciting Psalm 140:

Let my prayer arise as incense in thy sight, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a watch before my mouth, Lord, and a door round about my lips, lest my heart incline to evil words, to seek excuses in sin.

May the Lord kindle in us the fire of His love and the flame of everlasting charity. Amen.

Here the priest, the clergy, and the faithful are incensed. Then the priest, standing at the epistle side of the altar, washes his hands, *praying the twenty-fifth Psalm:*

Lord, I wash my hands in innocence, and I compass Thy altar,

That I may make the voice of praise be heard and proclaim all Thy wondrous works.

Lord, I love the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy majesty dwells.

Destroy not my soul with evildoers, nor my life with men of blood.

Their hands are full of crimes; their right hand is filled with bribes.

But I walk in my innocence; save me and have mercy on me.

My foot stands in an even place; I will praise the Lord with all the people.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Then the priest returns to the middle of the altar, bows a little, joins his hands upon the altar, and prays:

Receive, Holy Trinity, this offering, which we make to Thee in memory of the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honor of blessed Mary ever virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of these (*Saints whose relics rest in the altar*) and of all the Saints; that it may avail to their honor and our salvation, and that they whose memory we keep on earth may deign to make intercession for us in Heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

He kisses the altar, turns to the faithful, and says:

Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

To which the faithful answer through the server:

May the Lord receive the sacrifice at thy hands to the praise and glory of His own name, to our own benefit, and to that of all His Holy Church.

The priest answers in a subdued voice, Amen.

The priest now recites the secret prayer, *which changes each day, and concludes it aloud with the words:*

For ever and ever.

Amen.

Then follows

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

commonly called the Canon. *It begins with the* Preface, *which varies according to the feasts and seasons of the ecclesiastical year:*

The Lord be with you.

And with thee.

Lift up your hearts.

We have lifted them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is meet and just.

At present the Roman Missal contains thirteen Prefaces, of which the following is said on ordinary feast-days:

It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that at all times and in all places we give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, through Christ our Lord. Through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominions worship it, the powers are in awe; the heavens, and the heavenly hosts, and the blessed seraphim join together in celebrating with joy. With these, we pray thee, grant that our voices may be joined, while we say with humble praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.

Hail to thee on high!

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hail to thee on high!

The priest raises his hands, lifts his eyes upwards, lowers them immediately, bows low before the altar, and prays:

Therefore, most merciful Father, we, Thy suppliants, pray and beseech Thee, through

Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, to accept and bless these ✠ gifts, these ✠ offerings, this ✠ holy and unblemished sacrifice. We offer them up to Thee, first for thy holy Catholic Church, that it may please Thee to grant her peace, to watch over her, to bring her to unity, and to guide her throughout the world; likewise for Thy servant *N.*, our Pope, and our Bishop, *N.*, and for all true believers, who keep the Catholic and Apostolic faith.

Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, *N.* and *N.* (*here the priest prays a little while for the living*), and of all those here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee. For them do we offer, or they do themselves offer up to Thee, this sacrifice of praise for them and all theirs; for the redeeming of their souls; for the hope of salvation and well-being, and do now pay their vows unto Thee, eternal God, living, and true.

Mindful of our union, and reverencing the memory first of the glorious Mary, ever virgin, Mother of Jesus Christ our God and Lord; likewise of Thy blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon, and Thaddeus; of Linus, Cletus, Clement,

Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all Thy saints; for the sake of their merits and prayers grant that we may in all things be guarded by Thy protecting help. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

He spreads his hands over the sacrificial gifts and says:

We, therefore, beseech Thee, O Lord, to be appeased and to receive this offering which we, Thy servants, and Thy whole household do make unto Thee; order our days in Thy peace; command that we be rescued from eternal damnation and counted within the fold of Thine elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This offering do Thou, O Lord, we beseech thee, deign to make in all respects ✠ blessed, ✠ approved, ✠ valid, conformable, and acceptable. May it become for us the ✠ body and ✠ blood of Thy dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who, the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up to Heaven unto Thee, O God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, He ✠ blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples, saying:

Take and eat ye all of this, FOR THIS IS MY BODY.

In like manner, the supper being finished, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, again giving thanks to Thee, He ✠ blessed it and gave it to His disciples, saying:

Take and drink ye all of it, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT; A MYSTERY OF FAITH; WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY, FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

As often as you shall do these things, you shall do them in memory of Me.

Immediately after the first and after the second consecration the priest kneels and adores the body and blood of Christ, shows it to the faithful, puts it on the corporal, and again adores. Then he continues the sacrifice with the following prayers:

Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed Passion of the same Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, His Resurrection from the dead, and His glorious Ascension into Heaven, do offer unto Thy most excellent majesty of Thine own gifts

bestowed upon us, a clean ✠ offering, a holy ✠ offering, a spotless ✠ offering, the holy ✠ bread of eternal life, and the chalice ✠ of everlasting salvation.

Deign to look upon them with a favorable and kind countenance, and to receive them as Thou didst deign to receive the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our Patriarch Abraham, and that which Melchisedech, Thy high-priest, offered up to Thee, a holy sacrifice and a spotless gift.

Bowing low, he places his hands joined upon the altar and kisses it.

We humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, to command that these offerings be borne by the hands of Thy holy angel to Thine altar on high, in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty, that so many of us as by this partaking of the altar shall receive the most holy ✠ Body and ✠ Blood of Thy Son, may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Be mindful also, O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, *N.* and *N.*, who are gone before us with the sign of faith and sleep the sleep of peace. (*Here he prays a little while for the departed.*) To these, O Lord, and to all

who rest in Christ, we beseech thee, grant a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

He strikes his breast with his right hand, and slightly raising his voice, says:

To us sinners, also, Thy servants, who hope in the multitude of Thy mercies, deign to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and Martyrs; with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Agnes, Lucy, Cecilia, Anastasia, and with all Thy Saints; into their company, we pray thee, admit us, not weighing our merits, but granting us free pardon. Through Christ our Lord.

Through whom, Lord, Thou dost always create, ✠ sanctify, ✠ quicken, ✠ bless, and give to us these gifts.

At the following words he makes a cross three times with the host over the chalice, and twice before it.

Through ✠ Him, and with ✠ Him, and in ✠ Him is to Thee, God the ✠ Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy ✠ Ghost, (*lifting up a little the chalice and host*), all honor and glory for ever and ever.

The faithful answer through the server, Amen.

The offering of the sacrifice is now finished. It is followed by the second section of the sacrificial part of the Mass, which consists of the sacrificial repast, *or* Holy Communion.

Let us pray. Admonished by saving precepts and taught by divine instruction, we make bold to say:

Our Father, who art in Heaven: hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation.

But deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Holding the paten in his right hand, he continues:

Deliver us, Lord, we beseech Thee, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and by the pleading of the blessed and glorious Mary, ever virgin, Mother of God, and of Thy holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the Saints (*here he blesses himself with the paten and kisses it*), mercifully grant peace in

our days, that, helped by the succor of Thy mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all trouble.

He puts the paten under the host, which he breaks over the chalice, saying:

Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord.

He puts on the paten the portion which he has in his right hand. Then he breaks off a particle from the portion in his left hand, saying:

Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God.

He puts on the paten the portion in his left hand, and holding the particle in his right hand over the chalice, continues:

For ever and ever.

Amen.

He makes a cross three times over the chalice with the particle of the host, saying:

The peace ✠ of the Lord be ✠ always with ✠ you.

And with Thee.

He puts the particle into the chalice, saying:

May this mingling and hallowing of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ avail us who receive it unto life eternal. Amen.

He strikes his breast three times and says:

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

With his hands joined on the altar, he bows and says the following prayers:

Lord Jesus Christ, who didst say unto Thine Apostles, peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you; look not upon my sins, but on the faith of Thy Church; and deign to grant her peace and union according to Thy will. Who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who according to the will of the Father and through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost didst by Thy death give life to the world, deliver me by this Thy most holy Body and Blood from all my transgressions and from every evil, and make me always cleave to Thy commandments, and never suffer me to be separated from Thee. Who livest and reignest with the same God the Father and the Holy Ghost God for ever and ever. Amen.

Let not the reception of Thy body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, though unworthy, pre-

sume to take, turn against me unto judgment and condemnation; but through Thy loving kindness may it avail me for a safeguard and healing remedy for my soul and body. Who with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

I will take the Bread of Heaven and will call upon the Name of the Lord.

He takes both parts of the host into his left hand, strikes his breast three times, and says:

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.

He blesses himself with the sacred host and says:

May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep my soul unto eternal life.

He receives both portions of the host reverently and remains a short time meditating on the Most Holy Sacrament. Then he gathers up the crumbs on the paten and the corporal if there are any, and puts them into the chalice, praying with the Psalmist:

What return shall I make to the Lord for all that He has given to me? I will take the chalice of salvation and call upon the name of

the Lord. Giving praise, I will call upon the Lord; and I shall be saved from my enemies.

He blesses himself with the chalice and says:

May the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep my soul unto life eternal.

He then receives the Precious Blood. Holy Communion is now distributed to the faithful, who recite the Confiteor through the server. The priest pronounces the absolution as in the beginning of the Mass, and shows them the body of the Lord, saying:

Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who taketh away the sins of the world.

He says for them also three times:

Lord, I am not worthy. . . .

Blessing each communicant with the sacred host, he administers Holy Communion, saying to each:

May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep Thy soul unto eternal life. Amen.

After Holy Communion has been distributed, the server pours a little wine into the chalice to cleanse it, while the priest prays:

Grant, Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a clean mind; and from a temporal gift may it become for us an everlasting remedy.

He then cleanses his fingers with wine and water, praying:

May Thy body, Lord, which I have received, and Thy blood, which I have drunk, cleave unto my inmost soul; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, whom Thy pure and holy Sacraments have refreshed. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

He recites the Communio, *which changes each day, and then greets the faithful:*

The Lord be with you,

And with thy spirit.

The Postcommunio, *which also varies each day, is next said. Thereupon the priest greets the faithful again with the words:*

The Lord be with you.

And with thee.

Go, you are dismissed (*or if no Gloria was said in Mass:* Let us praise the Lord; *in Requiem Masses:* May they rest in peace. Amen).

Thanks be to God.

The Priest bows before the altar and says the concluding prayer:

May the performance of my liege duty be pleasing to Thee, O Holy Trinity; and grant that the sacrifice which I have offered all un-

worthy in the sight of Thy Majesty, may be received by Thee and win favor from Thy mercy for me and for all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

He kisses the altar, raises his hands, lifts his eyes upward, lowers them immediately, and bows to the cross, saying:

May almighty God bless you,

then turns toward the people and blesses them with the words:

The Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The beginning of the Gospel according to St. John is usually said at the end of the Mass:

The Lord be with you.

And with thee.

✠ The beginning of the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory be to thee, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made. In Him was the life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to bear witness of the light.

That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become children of God, to them that believe in His name; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (*Here all kneel to confess their faith and to adore the Word Incarnate.*) And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

The faithful answer through the server, Thanks be to God.

CHAPTER III. THE NOTION OF SACRIFICE ACCORDING TO THE LITURGY OF THE MASS

In order to avoid repetitions, several questions occurring in various parts of this treatise are studied together once for all in this chapter.

I. THOSE WHO OFFER THE SACRIFICE

Who is it, according to the liturgy of the Mass, that offers this Sacrifice? Though the priest is the one who offers the Sacrifice of the New Law in virtue of the power conferred upon him in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, nevertheless the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all Christians is an important teaching.

In the Catholic Church the priests do not occupy the position of absolute and independent mediators, as in other religions. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all" (I Tim. ii, 5 f.).

Christ is, therefore, the priest, and all others are mediators only in and through Him. We Christians are priests to the extent in which we participate in the priesthood of Christ. The validly ordained priest has the power to consecrate in the name of Christ and thus to call down Christ upon the altar as a sacrificial gift. He has the power to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice in the name of Christ and in His stead, so that juridically Christ is the true sacrificer; or according to another view, the priest has the power of causing the Sacrifice of the faithful to become one, by means of the consecration, with Christ's one Sacrifice of Redemption, which is really and substantially made present.

However, through the grace of the Redemption all the faithful are members of the mystical body of Christ and consequently participate in His priesthood by reason of the *sacramental character* impressed upon their souls in Baptism and Confirmation. In a manner they also sacrifice.

The idea of the active participation of all the faithful in the Christian sacrifice is clearly expressed in the liturgy. The plural form *"we* offer" (*offerimus*) is rather an ancient Roman manner of speech than a proof of this assertion,

the more so since the texts in which it occurs date from a time when the concelebration of bishop and priests was customary. But there is another series of texts which can be understood only as expressing the active participation of the faithful in the offering of the Sacrifice. In the *"Orate Fratres"* the priest speaks to the faithful of "my sacrifice and yours": *"Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours may become acceptable to God the Father almighty."* Before the consecration he prays: *"Be mindful O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, . . . For them do we offer, or they do themselves offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise for them and all theirs." "We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord to be appeased and to accept this offering which we, Thy servants and Thy whole household, make unto Thee."* After the consecration the priest prays: *"We, Thy servants, and also Thy holy people, offer to Thy most excellent Majesty."*

Hence both priest and people sacrifice, though in a different manner, as appears from the answer of the people to the "Orate Fratres": *"May the Lord receive the sacrificial gift* (which we, the faithful, have provided) *at Thy hands."*

The fact of a common action performed by the priest and all those who are present is of the utmost importance for the correct understanding of the liturgy. As previously stated, Christ is the true High Priest; but we cannot visibly perceive and represent His sacrificial act, since He becomes present only under the Eucharistic species. For this reason He is not brought before us in the liturgy as offering the sacrifice. It is we who sacrifice; we, who offer ourselves to God through the sacrificial gifts.[1]

We shall revert to this consideration in the sequel. For the present it suffices to draw attention to the necessity of approaching the liturgy with a definite personal attitude of mind. What takes place in the Mass is a matter of per-

[1] The faithful comply with the letter of the law if they have the intention of assisting at Holy Mass and occupy themselves with any pious thoughts whatever during the time in which the sacrificial action takes place. But whoever understands the meaning of the sacrifice will not be content to have it celebrated before his gaze as though he had no personal concern in it. He will rather take part in it by reciting appropriate prayers, preferably *the sacrificial prayers of the Church*. By doing so, the recommendation of Pope Pius X will be carried out. The sacrificial prayers of the Church are available to all. The Latin text of the Roman Missal is published in pocket editions and has been translated into English by Fortescue, Cabrol, Wynne, Lasance, and others.

The prayers of the liturgy possess this great advantage that they neither express mere momentary moods, nor have regard

sonal concern to every one present; it is an action in which all should take part. When we assist at Mass, we should rise above ourselves. Since we desire to devote and consecrate ourselves to God, we should unite ourselves in this sacrifice more closely with Christ, of whose mystical body we are the living members, and thus be borne aloft with Him and the whole Christian community to the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, in order that we may remain united with Him in love for the attainment of His honor and glory.

During the span of our earthly life our devotion to God and union with Him, of course, exist only through God's grace and the free acts of our will, the latter retaining the power of revoking its oblation. Hence the repetition of these free acts of the will is not only a psychologically necessary, but also a fruitful and vivifying exercise. It makes our union with

only to the sentiments of particular persons. They contain an inexhaustible wealth of suggestion and are suitable to every mood and every mind. More than half the prayers of the Mass are the same every day, but to those who inwardly experience the sacrificial action they constantly take on new aspects. Under the influence of momentary moods, different feasts, and the various needs of soul and body the act of consecrating oneself to God takes on a new character, and the prayers of the Missal appear in a new light.

God more firm, conscious, and deep, and extends its influence to our whole philosophy and practise of life. This justifies the anxiety of the Church to see her children assembled about her altar on certain days.

II. THE OBLATION

What is the meaning and purpose of the Offertory in the language of the liturgy? The term *"offerre"* is the only word used in the Ordinary of the Mass [2] to designate the sacrificial action. In its common acceptation, and according to medieval usage, this term signifies to tender, proffer, or present for acceptance. When we sacrifice, therefore, we tender a gift to God. A study of the sacrificial prayers of the Mass shows that an act of tender really takes place in the Mass; and as though intending to prevent any misunderstanding, the prayers of the Mass in the most varied expressions continually ask God's gracious acceptance of the gifts tendered to Him.

"Receive, O holy Father, almighty, eternal God, this spotless gift which I . . . offer to Thee."

[2] The "Ordinary" of the Mass consists of the fixed prayers and actions that never vary.

"We offer unto thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thee in Thy mercy that it may rise up as a sweet savor."

"May we be received by Thee, O Lord; and may our sacrifice . . . be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God."

"Receive, O holy Trinity, this offering which we make to Thee."

"We, Thy servants, and likewise Thy holy people, offer unto Thy most excellent majesty of Thine own gifts bestowed upon us . . . a pure victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation."

"We humbly beseech Thee . . . to command that these gifts be borne . . . to Thine altar on high."

The secret prayers express the same idea in the most diversified terms. They generally use the word *"offerre,"* but also a series of synonyms, such as *exhibere, dicare, reddere, deferre.*

"May the sacrifices which we offer up before Thee, O Lord, be consumed by that divine fire which, through the Holy Ghost, kindled the hearts of the disciples of Christ, Thy Son." (Friday in Whitsun Week.)

"Mercifully look down, O Lord, we beseech Thee, on the sacrifices which we present at Thy

holy altar . . ." (12th Sunday after Pentecost.)

"*May the sacrifices dedicated to Thee be offered to Thee, O Lord . . .*" (10th Sunday after Pentecost.)

"*We present to Thee offerings, O Lord, because of the appearance of Thy Son . . .*" (Octave of Epiphany.)

The acceptance of the sacrificial gifts is asked in varied phrases, which voice the desire that these gifts may be acceptable to God (*grata sint*), that God may look upon them with favor (*respice*), that He may receive them (*suscipe*) or accept them (*accipe*), that He may sanctify them (*sanctifica*).

"*May the gifts which we offer to Thee be worthy in Thy sight . . .*" (Mar. 27th, St. John Damascene.)

"*May the loving prayer of Thy saints not be wanting to us, O Lord, to render our gifts acceptable to Thee . . .*" (Dec. 28th, Holy Innocents.)

"*Propitiously regard the offerings which we tender to Thee, O Lord, . . .*" (Wednesday after 2nd Sunday in Lent.)

"*Propitiously receive, we beseech Thee, O*

Lord, the gifts of Thy people . . ." (Thursday in Easter week.)

"*Receive the gifts, we beseech Thee, O Lord, of the rejoicing Church . . .*" (Low Sunday.)

"*Accept, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift we have offered . . .*" (Wednesday in Whitsun Week.)

"*Sanctify the gifts we have offered, O Lord . . .*" (Christmas, third mass.)

Offering on the one hand and acceptance on the other effects a kind of union. In fact, the Secret of the first mass on Christmas reads: "*We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the offering of this day's festival be acceptable to Thee, that by Thy grace through this sacred communication we may be found like unto Him in whom our substance is united with Thee.*" The same idea is expressed elsewhere in the Missal. We also meet with St. Paul's conception of participation in the Divinity by means of a common altar erected to the same God: "*Grant, O merciful God, that we may ever deserve to minister worthily at Thy altars and be saved by constant participation thereof*" (Friday in Passion Week).

The term "*immolare*" also occurs frequently

in the Secrets. To-day it is commonly understood in the sense of "to slaughter," and the advocates of the theory of "mystical mactation" adduce it in favor of their view. It cannot be gainsaid that the Vulgate and many Fathers use the term in this sense. Nor can it be denied that even in the consecration theory one may speak of the mactation of Christ in a sense that is entirely correct, since the Mass makes the Sacrifice of the Cross present. But it is hardly probable that the term *"immolare"* has a different sense in the liturgy than *"offerre."* In other words, it expresses the idea of presenting, or offering, the same as the other terms already mentioned.

"Let the sacrifice of our devotion, we beseech Thee, O Lord, be always offered (*immoletur*) *to Thee."* (3rd Sunday in Advent.)

"We solemnly offer (*immolamus*) *the sacrifice of the beginning of Lent."* (1st Sunday in Lent.)

In the Middle Ages the term *"immolare"* was often used in this sense, for it was applied to things which cannot be "slaughtered" even figuratively, such as food, earth, etc. Now the Secret predicates the term *"immolare"* of the sacrificial gifts of bread and wine; hence

it can have only the sense of offering in this connection. Even in the phrase *"immolatur . . . Christus,"* which occurs only once, there is no reason to interpret it otherwise.

The terms *"mysterium"* and *"mysticum,"* which occur several times in the Secrets, are difficult to define. In most cases they probably refer to the "mystery" of sacrificial symbolism, the substitution of the gift for the sacrificer, or the gift in so far as it has a "mysterious" relation to the sacrificer. *"May this mystical offering be wholesome for us, O Lord."* (Oct. 14th, Feast of St. Callistus.)

In another instance it may refer to the mysterious type or figure of union with God in Heaven, which we attain by communication in the same sacrifice.

"May this holy offering, O Lord, ever bring upon us a blessing unto salvation, that its efficacy may produce what it performs in a mystery." (2nd Sunday after Easter.)

In the liturgy of Easter and Pentecost *"mysterium"* undoubtedly denotes the mystery of these feasts, but *"mysteria passionis"* expresses a general relation to the Sacrifice of the Cross.

"Receive, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the

prayers of Thy people with the offering up of sacrificial gifts, that having been begun at these Easter mysteries, they may by Thy operation avail us for a healing remedy unto everlasting life." (Holy Saturday.)

"May these mysteries of Thy passion and death bring upon us heavenly fervor." (Apr. 28th, Feast of St. Paul of the Cross.)

From all this it is apparent that the meaning of the sacrificial action is—*to present something to God.* Every explanation of the liturgy must proceed from this fundamental concept. All further expositions of detail can only specify and determine this act of oblation; they must not change the sense of the concept by denaturing it.

It has been objected that this view is too anthropomorphic, and hence cannot be applied to our attitude towards God. We reply that, when Luther declared that sacrifice in the sense of offering or presentation is meaningless, his rejection of it became the occasion upon which the Church defined the offering or presentation of the sacrificial gifts in the Mass as an article of faith.

In the first chapter of this treatise we have

pointed out the deeper meaning and ethical value of this doctrine.

The external part of the sacrificial action consists in presenting a gift to God. What share does the soul take in this outward act? We desire to fulfill a duty of service (*servitium*) toward God and to give expression to that fact. We desire to practise humility in the medieval and ancient Christian sense of zealously serving a beloved and honored liege lord.

"Receive . . . this spotless gift, which I, Thine unworthy servant, do offer unto Thee, my God, living and true, for mine own countless sins, transgressions, and failings, . . . that it may avail both me and them unto salvation for life everlasting."

"May the Lord receive this sacrifice at Thy hands to the praise and glory of His name, to our own benefit, and to that of all His holy Church."

"By Him, and with Him, and in Him is all honor and glory to Thee God the Father. . . .

"Be appeased, O Lord, by our humble prayers, and graciously receive these gifts which Thy servants and handmaids make to Thee, that what each does offer in honor of Thy name,

may avail for the salvation of all." (5th Sunday after Pentecost.)

"*Receive, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gifts offered by our duty as subjects, and mercifully sanctify Thy gifts.*" (Friday after the first Sunday in Lent.)

"*Be appeased, O Lord, we beseech Thee, by the petitions and sacrifices of our liege homage . . .*" (2nd Sunday in Advent.)

Devotion (*devotio*) to God, our Lord, and reverence (*reverentia*) before his greatness impel us to acts of service.

"*Let the sacrifice of our devotion, we beseech Thee, O Lord, be continually offered unto Thee. . . .*" (3rd Sunday in Advent.)

"*. . . holy gifts we reverently offer unto Thee . . .*" (Mass for the Election of a Pope.)

Thanksgiving (*gratiarum actio*), at times the need of expiation (*placatio*), and especially praise (*laus*), joy (*gaudium*), and love (*caritas*), which we owe to God for numberless benefits, necessitate a service in return, an expression of duty and friendship.

"*Receive, O Lord, the odor of this sacrifice, together with our thanksgiving . . .*" (Mass in Thanksgiving.)

"Consent, O merciful God, that we may be permitted to bring to Thee in sincere service sacrificial gifts of propitiation and praise." (Wednesday in Passion Week.)

"On the memorial day of Thy saints, O Lord, we offer to Thee sacrificial gifts of praise . . ." (Mass "Os Iusti.")

"With Easter gladness, O Lord, we offer sacrifices to Thee . . ." (Wednesday in Easter Week.)

"Defend us, O Lord, who offer to Thee Thy burnt offerings; and that our hearts may be more fervently prepared for them, enkindle therein the flames of Thy divine charity." (Feast of the Sacred Heart.)

These sentiments impel the soul to action. Children who respect their parents, friends who love each other, will manifest this attitude externally. Who could revere and love God, yet conceal these sentiments in his soul without doing violence to human nature?

III. THE SACRIFICIAL GIFT

The unbroken tradition of the Christian era testifies that Christ, the God-man, is the sacrificial gift of the Mass. To deny or explain

away this teaching would be robbing Christianity of its highest honor, which exalts it above all other religions. The Church has adhered to this teaching in all her decisions up to the present day.

In the discussion of various theological theories the fact has sometimes been overlooked that in this fundamental doctrine of Christianity there is question only of the object of the final oblation. Christ is offered to the Father as the sacrificial gift proper to the Church. Nothing is said or implied concerning the object of the sacrificial conversion.

As will be seen presently, the structure of the liturgy contains within itself a sacrificial conversion. The question as to what constitutes the sacrificial gift of the Church before this conversion has taken place, cannot be decided *a priori* on general scientific or theological grounds. In ordinary sacrifice, the sacrificial change is to be found between the state of resin and the fumes of incense, between the meat of sacrifice and the smoke rising therefrom, between the oil poured out and the ascending odor. Is Christ the sacrificial gift in the Eucharistic sacrifice even before the conversion takes place, or does He become the sacrificial gift only

through the miracle of the consecration? The Church has rendered no decision on this point.

What constitutes the sacrificial gift of the Mass according to the liturgy?

From the beginning of the sacrificial action until the consecration, bread and wine are termed sacrificial gifts as the terms *hostia, oblatio, dona, munera, sacrificia,* etc., clearly show.

These liturgical terms must be understood in their strict and true sense. There is no reason to depart from their literal meaning—except to bolster some particular theory. The directions to the priest (rubrics) employ these very words, and certainly mean only bread and wine. The adjectives attached to them, such as "immaculate" (*immaculatus*), "unblemished" (*illibatus*), and "holy" (*sanctus*), in profane literature as well as in the liturgy are applied to other things; for example, the Ordinary of the Mass calls the sacrifice of Melchisedech "a holy sacrifice, a spotless gift." Hence these qualifying terms do not prove that the words which they modify are anticipated designations of the Eucharist. The phrase "sacrificial gift prepared," occurring in the Offertory prayers, can be applied only to bread and wine. Finally, the

liturgy frequently expresses the petition that God may "bless," "sanctify," "consecrate," etc., our sacrificial gifts. These words can only apply to the bread and wine, for the Eucharist itself can neither be consecrated nor sanctified.

The evidence of the *Secreta* is even more convincing. In the second Mass of Christmas morning we pray:

"May our gifts, we beseech Thee, O Lord, become suitable for acceptance through the mysteries of this birthday festival and ever confer peace upon us; that, as He who was newborn as man withal shone forth as God, so also our earthly gift may bestow upon us what is divine."

This prayer contains a striking characterization of the whole course of the sacrificial action. We offer to God earthly gifts (*terrena substantia*), which are to be made worthy of His acceptance by means of the sacrificial action. This takes place through the fact that they "bring what is divine," that is, they are converted into the Eucharistic Christ, who is God and man. Hence at the beginning of our sacrifice bread and wine are the gifts.

In other *Secretae* our gifts are designated as "created gifts," which God "has given to sus-

tain our frail life"; the sanctification is asked of the gifts which "individuals among the faithful have presented," etc. These expressions can refer only to bread and wine. The *Secretae* also petition in the most varied terms for the blessing and sanctification of the gifts offered to God. Only these earthly gifts can be sanctified.

The theologians of an earlier time found it self-evident that the bread and wine should be designated as sacrificial gifts before the consecration. It is sufficient to refer to Ivo of Chartres (d. 1117) of the twelfth and John Gropper (d. 1559) of the sixteenth century, and to the decrees of the provincial council of Cologne of the year 1549. Luther ridiculed the Mass, because he regarded it as absurd to offer bread and wine to almighty God. To this objection the theologians of his time made the telling reply that we do offer bread and wine, not, however, for the sake of these gifts themselves, but rather that they may be converted into the sacrificial gift, which is Christ.

These words indicate the course of development of the sacrificial action in the liturgy, requiring bread and wine as the sacrificial gifts and as the objects in which the sacrificial con-

version is to take place. The liturgy knows only *one* sacrificial conversion, the consecration and sanctification of bread and wine, or, to express it more exactly, the physical, substantial change of these gifts into the Eucharistic Christ.

This change takes place in the consecration. As soon as it is accomplished, the Eucharistic Christ is designated as the sacrificial gift. In opposition to the repeated phrase, *"our gifts,"* used before the consecration, mention is now made of *"Thy gifts";* in opposition to the oft expressed petition that our gifts may be sanctified, the "holy gift" alone is now mentioned; and it is remarkable evidence of the Church's own conception of sacrifice that Christ is not characterized by any of the great attributes of His Divinity, but as *"the Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation."* The idea of a sacrificed food, therefore, is retained, for Christ is present in the guise of food as the nourishment of souls.

Are we justified in saying that, according to this conception, the Christian sacrifice has two kinds of independent sacrificial gifts, bread and wine on the one hand, and the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ on the other? This would seem

permissible in view of the fact that the bread and wine are also designated as sacrificial gifts in the true and proper sense. But it is not permissible! If bread and wine were not sacrificial gifts in the true sense, they would bear no immediate intrinsic relation to the Sacrifice of the Mass. They could not be regarded as the gifts which are sacrificially converted, and from which Christ is to issue forth as the ultimate sacrificial gift. But precisely because they *are* the gifts to be converted, and nothing more, they are not independent sacrificial gifts, but are offered in order that they may be converted, whereas Christ is offered for His own sake. The bread bears the same relation to Christ that the grains of resin bear to the fumes of incense,—with this difference, that the fumes issue from the grains of incense by a process of natural combustion, whereas Christ issues from the bread by a miraculous conversion. The difference between the two cases, therefore, lies in the nature of the sacrificial conversion, not in the mutual relations of the sacrificial gifts.

The foregoing remarks are sufficient to prove that a consistent line of thought pervades the entire structure of the Mass liturgy. If we bear this in mind, no difficulties arise from any

prayer, action, or expression employed by the Church. Bread and wine are the sacrificial gifts. They are such in the strict sense. But they are not the ultimate sacrificial gifts, because they are destined to be sacrificially converted. The Eucharistic Christ is the ultimate sacrificial gift. He is a true sacrificial gift, because he issues forth from the sacrificial conversion.

The mention in the *Secreta* of the relation of these earthly gifts to Christ, or of the grace produced by the sacrifice, is a confirmation of our view, rather than an argument against it.

Viewed in the light of the foregoing exposition, the idea and the structure of the Mass fit snugly into the contour of all that the history of nations teaches us regarding sacrifice. The theologians of earlier times, such as St. Thomas Aquinas, agree with recent ethnologists in holding that the fundamental idea of all sacrifice consists in offering and presenting to God a gift (of food) in order to bring about the union of the sacrificing person with Him. The prayers of the Mass can be considered true sacrificial prayers only because they develop this idea. In any other hypothesis they would be merely prayers accompanying a sacrifice.

IV. THE SYMBOLISM OF SACRIFICE

In the first chapter of this treatise we distinguished a twofold symbolism of sacrifice: the symbolic offering of a gift in order to glorify and do homage to God, and the further, profounder oblation of a gift symbolizing oneself. A perusal of the texts already quoted obviates the necessity of adducing special evidence to prove that the Church regards and offers her sacrificial gift as a gift of homage. Whatever the Church does, she does for the honor of God.

But does the liturgy contain evidence of the second symbolism of sacrifice, the intention of outwardly expressing the oblation of oneself by the oblation of a gift?

From the nature of the case we must not expect too much. Wherever an external act is intended to symbolize an interior state of mind, verbal utterance of the idea is not to be expected in addition to the external act itself, whose primary object is to give expression to the idea. Such verbal utterance must be the less expected in the Christian religion, because it teaches that God needs nothing, and consequently the offer-

ing of a gift to Him is primarily a symbolical act. It is natural, therefore, that the sacrificial prayers which accompany the external action should be more or less exclusively concerned with the sacrificial gifts and the external action of the sacrifice.

In matter of fact the *Ordo Missae* merely hints at this symbolism.

As we pour water into the wine we pray *"that we may become partakers of His divinity, who deigned to share with us our human nature."* This participation is to be effected by means of *"this mystery of water and wine,"* that is, through the sacrificial gifts. We are to be united with God just as these gifts are united with Him.

Certain writers have sought the second symbolism of sacrifice in the following prayer: *"In a humble spirit and a contrite heart may we be received by Thee, O Lord; and may our sacrifice so be offered up in Thy sight to-day that it may be pleasing to thee, O Lord God."* This is merely probable evidence, for in its literal sense this prayer is no more than a petition asking that we and our gifts may be acceptable to God.

More convincing evidence is contained in the

prayer which is said at the incensation of the altar. Taking up the idea expressed in Apocalypse VIII, 5, the Church considers the incense as a symbol of prayer, that is, of man's inner dedication to God:

"Let this incense, which thou hast blessed, arise to Thee, O Lord . . ."

"Let my prayer, O Lord, arise like incense before Thee, and the lifting up of my hands like an evening sacrifice."

These texts show that the entire ceremony of incensation is an expression of the symbolism of sacrifice.

The memento for the living mentions the *"vota"* which the faithful offer to God. They may point to the inner sentiments of the faithful, although *"vota"* may also designate the sacrificial gifts.

In substance, though not in words, this symbolism is also contained in the prayers which follow the consecration. They were always regarded in this sense in the Middle Ages. Their text will be studied later.

The *Secretae,* which in their richly varied forms of expression always give free play to the idea underlying them, so also in the subject here under discussion, contain indisputable evi-

dence for the symbolism of sacrifice. The following examples will suffice:

"Grant to us, O Lord, that . . . we may join with the gift of the altar a sacrifice of perfect charity." (June 22nd, Feast of St. Paulinus.) In this prayer *"charity"* expresses the aim of union with God through sacrifice.

"Receive this sacrifice, . . . that we may offer to Thee the acceptable affection of our mind." (Saturday after Ash Wednesday.)

". . . grant, that we may offer to Thee a heart made clean through the mystery of this gift." (Saturday in Whitsun Week.)

What gift is it that is always and everywhere designated as the gift symbolized by the sacrifice? It is never human life as such, but rather the whole man: *"we ourselves," "the mind," "the heart," "charity," "the body."*

In addition to this explicit mention of the symbolism of sacrifice the *Secretae* in many cases identify the sacrificial gift with prayer. Both the gift and the prayer are *"offered"* to God, and the *"acceptance"* of both is requested. This presupposes the intention, on the part of the Church, to offer the inner man to God together with or through the gifts.

The ancient ceremony of the Consecration of

Virgins portrays this oblation in a plastic and pregnant form. It is true that this ceremony does not describe the offering of oneself as a sacrifice in the strict sense, but it is closely connected with the offering. The young woman is brought by her parents to the bishop together with the sacrificial gift, that is, bread and wine for the Sacrifice of the Mass. The bishop takes her hand, which has been wrapped in the altar cloth, while she and the faithful sing the following antiphon: *"I am wedded to Him whom the angels serve, whose beauty sun and moon admire."* The Rule of St. Benedict prescribes the oblation of boys in a similar form. Parents who desire to offer a son to the monastery, should request his admission in writing, and offer this document together with the sacrificial gifts and the boy's hand wrapped in the altar cloth, to the abbot.[3]

It might be objected against this theory that the Eucharistic Christ as such is a gift which can be offered to God since Christ offered Himself on the cross to God.

It is true that we have on our altars a gift

[3] According to Ildephonsus Herwegen, O.S.B., *Germanische Rechtssymbolik in der römischen Liturgie. Deutschrechtliche Beiträge,* Vol. VIII, No. 4.

which may be and is offered to God on its own account. But attention has already been called to the Catholic doctrine of the mystical body of Christ, and it may be regarded as certain that the purpose for which the oblation of Christ is renewed and the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present again in the Mass, is none other than to offer the faithful to the Heavenly Father in connection and in union with Christ. This is the unanimous teaching of ancient theologians and writers on the Mass, who give much prominence to the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ, and the more perfect membership in it effected through the Holy Sacrifice.

Considered in himself alone, man is not worthy of being accepted by God; consequently, in offering sacrifice, we unite ourselves with Jesus Christ, a gift which is of itself pleasing to God; and united with Christ, we know that we are sure to be accepted by God if we are living members of Christ's mystical body through sanctifying grace.

In this sense the Church maintains the symbolism of sacrifice in her liturgy. The following expositions will show how she carries out this symbolism in detail.

CHAPTER IV. THE STRUCTURE OF THE LITURGICAL SACRIFICE

A. THE SACRIFICE

Whoever is familiar with the solemn blessings and consecrations of the Church, cannot fail to be struck by the resemblance which the *external structure* of the Mass liturgy bears to them.

This similarity is most clearly apparent on Palm Sunday, when the ceremony of blessing the palms and the Mass, which are outwardly very much alike, immediately follow each other. Each of them consists of an antiphon for the introit, an oration, a lesson and gradual, a gospel, a prayer for the blessing of the object with which the rite is concerned, a preface with the usual introduction, the Sanctus concluding the preface, a series of prayers asking the blessing or consecration of the object, its actual blessing by incensing and sprinkling with holy water, and, finally, the use of the object.

This general plan is in evidence everywhere.

These blessings have even been termed preface prayers, because the actual blessing is imparted in the form of a preface.

The liturgy of the Mass, therefore, is not an isolated structure. Not even the idea of offering is proper to the Mass, as it occurs in the rite of the Consecration of Virgins (used today only in conferring the habit upon Sisters) and in the ordination of priests, which in many ways resembles the former ceremony.

The *sequence of ideas* in the Mass is also perfectly analogous to the consecrations in use in the Church. In both cases the prayers contain a petition asking the blessing and consecration of the person or object, though they are expressed in a variety of terms and forms. This blessing is conferred in different ways in the various rites, by a gesture of the hand, by sprinkling with holy water, anointing, or pronouncing the form of the sacrament, etc. Then the blessed or consecrated object is used for the purpose for which it is intended.

There is a further analogy between these rites, which Abbot Ildephonsus Herwegen, O.S.B., has termed the *art principle* of the liturgy. The liturgical action and the prayers which accompany it are built up according to

a definite principle, which is found in the Mass as well as all other rites of consecration. Man is raised up from the darkness of separation from God to the radiant height of the love of God and union with Him, just as the object to be blessed is transformed from a profane into a sacred thing dedicated to God.

Hence the liturgy of the Mass in several respects presents a definitely limited sequence of ideas.

The idea of transfiguration and blessing, which lies at the basis of all liturgical prayers, is expressly attested for the Mass by the greatest theologians of ancient times. In their view the designation of the sacrificial conversion as a *consecration* (of bread and wine) is no more the result of chance than is the agreement of this name with that given to other rites of blessing. They consider the sanctification of the sacrificial gifts, and through them that of the sacrificing persons, as essential to the notion of sacrifice. They derive the meaning of sacrifice from the etymology of the word *"sacrificium," "sacrum facere,"* to make holy. The theologians of the Middle Ages did not hesitate to adopt *St. Augustine's* view that the Canon of the Mass, including the preface, and hence also

the sacrifice, is the "sanctification of the sacrificial gift offered to God," [1] and expressed it in precisely formulated definitions.

About the year 400 the fundamental idea of the Christian liturgy of sacrifice is expressed in its simplest form by *Ambrosiaster,* when he lets the priest pray at the consecration:

"Make this our sacrificial gift valid, fully sufficient, valuable, and acceptable for the mystery of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who . . . [*here follows the narrative of the institution of the Eucharist with the concluding words:*] as often as you do this, you shall be mindful of me, until I come again. Calling to mind, therefore, His glorious passion, and His Resurrection from the dead, and His Ascension into Heaven, we offer to Thee this unblemished sacrificial gift, this spiritual sacrificial gift, this unbloody sacrificial gift, this holy bread and the chalice of eternal life: and we petition and pray that Thou mayest cause this gift to be borne aloft by Thy holy angel to Thine altar on high, as Thou wast pleased to receive the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, the sacrificial gifts of our Patriarch

[1] *"Sanctificatio sacrificii Dei"; Sermo 227.*

Abraham, and those which the high priest Melchisedech offered to Thee." [2]

This is the oldest known form of the sacrificial prayer of the Roman liturgy. It clearly expresses the petition that our earthly gift may be sanctified and raised to a higher order, so that the act of offering, already begun, may be worthily concluded in the consecration, through which we obtain a gift that is truly acceptable to God,—namely, the holy Bread and the Chalice of eternal life.

In all these testimonies mention is made of a sacrificial change or conversion, which spells consecration and sanctification, and as such, runs parallel with all other consecrations, but which is unique in as far as it consists in physical sanctification by substantial conversion.

Thus a comparative study of the liturgy leads to the same conception of the contents and development of the sacrificial action as that which resulted from the study of ethnology and the history of dogma.

In all other consecrations two parts are clearly defined: a *preparatory part,* ending with the gospel, which is designed to create the right

[2] *De Sacramentis IV, 5–6.*

religious mood; and the consecration and blessing properly so-called. The Mass has precisely the same structure: there is a preparatory part, which ends with the gospel (or on certain days with the Creed), and is usually called the Mass of the Catechumens; and, secondly, the sacrificial part, which is the *sacrificial action* proper, and is usually termed Mass of the Faithful.

The preparatory part of the Mass is merely a prayer service, and was originally identical with the first part of the Divine Office (Breviary). Traces of this identity survive in the present abbreviated form of this part of the Mass. It varies constantly according to the feasts and seasons of the ecclesiastical year,[3] expressing the religious mood of the day. Its object is to arouse in the hearts of the faithful sentiments appropriate to the day. Thus is prepared the ground from which the full flower of sacrifice is to spring.

Sacrifice, as implying the conscious offering of oneself to God, must mature gradually out of the sentiments of faith and reverence living in the soul. It is the culmination of the

[3] The meaning and connection of these texts is explained in Kramp, *Messliturgie und Gottesreich.*

spiritual life, and therefore requires time and nourishment in order to develop.

Not without good reason do the rules of religious communities and the rubrics of the Divine Office place the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the conclusion of the religious exercises of the morning. The soul should first be filled with the love of God and zeal for His service, and then offer itself in sacrifice as the mature fruit of this love.

Hence in the view of the Church it is a matter of course that we should assist at the Holy Sacrifice in the state of grace. In ancient times the catechumens and public sinners who had been condemned by a public sentence of the bishop, were dismissed with the formula *"Ite, missa est"* after the Mass of the Catechumens. They were "separated," that is, they did not belong to the Communion of Saints, were not members of the mystical body of Christ, and on this account they were not permitted to assist at the sacrifice which expresses and deepens in a special manner the union of the faithful with one another and with Christ. Only the "faithful" or "saints" were privileged to assist at the second part of the Mass, or sacrificial service.

I. THE PREPARATION OF THE SACRIFICE

(A) THE PREPARATION OF THE SACRIFICIAL GIFTS

The Mass, or sacrificial action properly so-called, begins with the reciprocal greeting of the officiating priest and the people: *"The Lord be with you—and with thee."* This part of the Mass is subdivided into the Mass of Sacrifice and the Communion Mass, or sacrifice and sacrificial repast. The sacrificial action extends to the *"Amen"* immediately preceding the Our Father. By this word the faithful express their assent to the offering which is made in their name by the priest. Thereupon another preface begins the preparation for Holy Communion, the sacrificial repast uniting God and the faithful.

In the ancient Roman liturgy the first part of the Mass proper contained more action and less prayer than it does to-day. The faithful brought their gifts of bread and wine to the altar, where the priests and deacons received them, and arranged the bread and wine required for the communion of the faithful on the altar. Then followed the ablution of the hands, ren-

dered necessary by the circumstances of the case. After this the bishop or priest said the "prayer over the sacrificial gifts" (*oratio super oblata*), or secret prayer, which expressed two distinct ideas: the offering of the gifts and a petition for their blessing. This course of the sacrificial action is still found in the papal mass of Innocent III (d. 1216).

In our present-day liturgy the preparation of the sacrificial gifts is considerably shortened. In place of the ancient custom of receiving the gifts offered by the faithful, two groups of prayers have been inserted between the offertory chant and the Secret. Both groups develop the idea of preparatory oblation and contain a petition for the blessing of the gifts. The original character of this section, the preparation of the sacrificial gifts, has thus been completely preserved.

The priest's greeting is followed by an *"Oremus,"* but without an oration following. This seems at one time to have been the introduction to the "universal prayer," or "prayer of the faithful" for the needs of the whole Church. St. Augustine[4] tells us that this prayer was said at this particular juncture, and

[4] *Ep.*, 149, 16.

ancient non-Roman liturgies have it in this place. In some countries a "universal prayer" is said aloud by all the faithful immediately after the sermon.

The *"Oremus"* is followed by the *"Offertory."* This was formerly a much longer chant, which filled up the time required for the faithful to bring their gifts to the altar. Its name indicates that it was connected with an offering. The ideas expressed in the Offertory of to-day rarely have any connection with the offering, but echo the office of the day.

The ancient Christian liturgy requires all the faithful who assist at Mass to contribute personally and publicly to the sacrificial gift which is offered to God. St. Cyprian addresses the following words to a lady of high standing, who considered herself quite above bringing along bread and wine for the sacrifice: "You are rich and bring nothing for the sacrifice, but in Holy Communion you take a portion brought by a poor person." [5] St. Augustine expresses pity for the women whom Alaric held captive, because they can no longer bring their sacrificial gift to the altar, and have no priest to

[5] *De Opere et Eleem, 15.*

offer their gifts to God.[6] In a council held at Rome in the year 1078, Pope Gregory VII decreed that every Christian should bring a gift for the Mass and none should come with empty hands.

The Christians of those ages were actuated by the idea, repeatedly expressed in the Old Testament: "Thou shalt not appear with empty hands before the face of the Lord."[7] Whoever approaches God should bring a gift of homage. As long as ordinary (leavened) wheat bread was used at Mass, the faithful brought of their own bread, just as they offered (red) wine in special cruets. But when the use of unleavened bread was established,[8] other gifts and offerings of money were substituted. In some countries the beautiful custom of walking around the altar in procession at the Offertory and depositing an offering of money upon it, has survived in Requiem Masses to the present day. It is remarkable, too, that the Offertory of the Requiem Mass alone has retained its older and longer form to the present day. The collection now usually taken up at the Offertory

[6] *Ep.* III, *8.*

[7] *Ecclus. 35, 6.*

[8] In Rome between the ninth and eleventh centuries; St. Bede, d. 735, is the earliest witness.

is a reminiscence of the ancient custom of the faithful to bring the sacrificial gifts for the Mass.

Unfortunately the meaning of the Offertory as a gift of the Christian people to their Lord disappeared from the minds of the faithful when the custom of offering a gift at Mass fell into desuetude. Some of the Mass prayers in use to-day presuppose this custom, and it is desirable that at least the symbolism of the sacrifice be brought before the minds of all those who assist at Mass. St. Augustine remarks with particular emphasis that God is not interested so much in the external gift as in the devotion and self-oblation of the faithful as a gift of homage. In discussing the Offertory of the Mass, medieval theologians and liturgists remark that we should not offer like Cain, who presented a gift, but failed to offer himself, and therefore could not be pleasing to God; but like Abel, who dedicated himself to God together with the best part of his flock. The faithful should again learn to regard the sacrificial gifts of bread and wine as *their* gifts and should unite their oblation of themselves with the offering of these gifts to God by the priest.

While the Offertory chant accompanies the

offering of gifts by the faithful, the prayers which follow are intended to express the sentiments which move the priest in the preparation of the sacrificial gifts and their preliminary presentation. These prayers, as we said before, are divided into two groups.

The first group expresses the *preparation of the sacrificial gifts* and their first or *preparatory oblation.*

Bread and wine are the sacrificial gifts of the Christian people. This is in harmony with the institution of the Holy Sacrifice by Christ at the Last Supper. Why did He choose these particular gifts? Considering the facts set forth in our introductory chapter, we find it quite natural that he should have selected food and drink. Moreover, God had foretold the Mass as "a pure food offering" through the prophet Malachias.

But why did Christ choose bread and wine from among the various kinds of food? The most natural reason probably is that they are the ordinary nourishment of a large portion of mankind, and are found in every part of the world,—a consideration of the greatest importance for the universal spread of Christianity. The unity of the Christian sacrifice can, there-

fore, be aptly expressed by these means of subsistence.

But either bread or wine would have been sufficient; why are both required for the Mass? And why is there a *double consecration?*

It is often asserted that without the double consecration, which represents the separation of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Mass would not be a sacrifice. This idea, which arises from recent theories on the sacrificial character of the Mass, is not required by any decision of the Church, nor is it founded upon tradition. It finds no support either in the Roman, or any other liturgy. Hence it is useless for the explanation of the liturgy, and though it has become familiar and dear to many, we must abstract from it here.

All the older theologians are agreed that the double consecration is required in Mass because bread *and* wine are the complete nourishment of man, who needs both solid and liquid food to sustain life. Furthermore, "wine cheers the heart of man" (*Ps. 103, 15*); it increases his vital activity, at least temporarily, and in a certain sense, therefore, is to be regarded as a nourishment of the soul. Hence, from this

point of view, bread and wine are the complete nourishment of man, sustaining him in soul and body. Both together are, so to speak, the typical food of man, and on this account are best adapted to serve not merely as a symbol of human life, but of the entire human person. For sacrificial gifts are symbols, and the symbolic character of bread and wine is founded on the purpose for which they are used.

Since, according to the prophecy of Malachias, the Mass is a sacrifice of food, and since Christ, when he instituted it, offered sacrifice according to the order of Melchisedech, who sacrificed bread and wine, these elements are the complete sacrificial gift of man in the Mass.

Moreover, as the sacrificial gift is to be consumed by the faithful in the sacrificial repast after the sacrifice is finished, its character of a complete nourishment is also brought out in the Eucharistic repast.

Furthermore, Christ terms himself "the Bread of life" and "the true Vine." Hence bread and wine remind us of Him and are apposite symbols of His Person. When we offer them as sacrificial gifts, they direct our

thoughts to Christ, whom they represent, and into whose Body and Blood they are to be converted.

The bread also brings to mind the body of Christ, into which it is converted, and the (red) wine recalls His blood, which flowed from His Body in the Sacrifice of the Cross. Thus bread and wine recall the Sacrifice of the Redemption, which is renewed and made present in the Mass.

Since bread and wine may be considered as the nourishment of body and soul, Christ is truly the nourishment of the whole man.

Bread and wine are also symbols of the mystical Christ. This idea is almost as old as Christianity itself, for it occurs in the *Didache*.[9] As the one bread was made from many grains of wheat, and the one wine from many grapes, so Christ's mystical body, the Church, has issued from a multitude of faithful Christians. And as the true bread is by sacrificial conversion changed into the true Christ, so the faithful, whom the bread symbolizes, are received through the same conversion into the mystical Christ, who is also symbolized by it.

This last-mentioned idea is of the greatest

[9] The "Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles," written about A.D. 80/90. See also 1 Cor x, 17.

importance for the liturgical conception of sacrifice, which is dominated by it through its entire course of development. It gives a deep meaning to what might otherwise appear as toying with symbolic values. Christ is the holy sacrificial gift, the only sacrificial gift of intrinsic value which mankind can offer to God. Every other sacrificial gift that we may desire to offer to Him,—whether it be a material gift, or ourselves symbolized by it,—must be united with Christ and converted into Him.

It is worthy of remark that in this and other parts of the liturgy the individual is never an isolated object of God's and the Church's care. He has his place in the liturgy, but always as a member of the Christian community. The liturgy retains and develops St. Paul's idea of the one body, whose head is Christ, and whose members are the faithful. The Christian never stands alone; like the branch of the vine, he lives in union with Christ, and in union with all the faithful through Christ. Charity is the bond which unites them all.

In these uncharitable, selfish, and pagan days of ours assuredly this unselfish, benevolent, and considerate love, this conscious unity with Christ, is capable of bringing the faithful

nearer to one another at the altar and in practical life, and give them once again the gladdening social consciousness that they are "the redeemed," "the holy ones" of God. As a prerequisite for this condition of society the individual must become conscious of this union of all the faithful in Christ, and be ever mindful of it in his private and public life.

The Oblation and the Petition to God for Acceptance

Our sacrificial gifts, therefore, are bread and wine. They must be duly prepared and offered. In the liturgy of to-day the bread is no longer prepared in a special manner. Formerly it was brought to the altar and silently placed upon it. To-day the following prayer accompanies this act:

"Suscipe, sancte Pater—Receive, O holy Father, almighty, eternal God, this spotless gift, which I, Thine unworthy servant, do offer unto Thee, my God, living and true, for mine own countless sins, transgressions, and failings, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, living or dead; that it may avail both me and them for salvation unto life eternal. Amen."

This prayer embodies in a few words all the objects for which sacrifice may be offered.

The first and highest purpose of sacrifice is to honor God, to acknowledge His transcendent excellence and greatness. St. Augustine says that no one sacrifices to any being which he does not know or believe to be God. Accordingly, this prayer contains a profession of faith in "Almighty God," who manifests His power in this creation, and in the "Holy Father," who reveals His holiness through the Redemption. At the same time it is an acknowledgment of the "true and living God."

At the end of the sacrificial part of the Mass this acknowledgment of God recurs in terms even more solemn: "In Him [Christ] is given to Thee, God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory." The same idea reappears in other sections of this part of the Mass, especially in the Preface, which acknowledges God's favors to us and our duty of gratitude. Generally speaking, however, the Mass praises and honors God by an act of thanksgiving (*Eucharistia*) rather than by words.

The second purpose of sacrifice is the welfare of those who offer it, or, rather, of all the faith-

ful. The Church in her liturgy prays also for the pagans and for those of other religious beliefs; but as only members of the mystical body of Christ were formerly permitted to assist at the sacrifice, it was offered only for them.

Expiation is not the only purpose of sacrifice. There are many others, ranging from the forgiveness of sins to complete union with Christ, and, through Him, with the Father. These objects comprise also physical well-being and peace on earth. Medieval theologians and liturgists love to regard the Sacrifice of the Mass as a remedy for our daily (not mortal) sins, which are indicated in the first Offertory prayer by the words "innumerable sins"; but they are even more attached to the notion that the Mass strengthens and perfects our union with Christ and the Father. The liturgy takes up this idea in the following prayer.

After the bread has been offered the *wine* is poured into the chalice, and water is blessed and mingled with it. The prayer accompanying this ceremony is an incomparably beautiful expression of the Christian idea of sacrifice:

"Deus qui—O God, who in a marvelous manner didst dignify man's being in creating it, and

in a manner still more marvelous didst renew it; grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of the Divine Nature of Him who condescended to share with us our human nature, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son."

With the exception of the phrase, "by the mystery of this water and wine," this prayer is an ancient Christmas oration. The parallelisms in both prayers indicate that the Church intends to request union with Christ for those who offer the sacrifice. The added phrase suggests the same purpose.

Which is the "mystery" mentioned in this prayer? St. Cyprian tells us in his memorable letter to Cæcilius [10] that in the Apocalypse water is the symbol of the people, and wine the symbol of Christ's blood. "When water is mingled with the wine in the chalice," he says, "the people are united with Christ, and the multitude of the faithful are joined with Him in whom they believe." The "mystery of this water and wine," therefore, is the union of those who offer the sacrifice with Christ. This sacrificial union takes place when the wine is

[10] *Ep.*, 63: On the Mass and its Relation to the Sacrifice of the Last Supper.

changed into the Blood of Christ, not when the water is mingled with it.

After the chalice has been prepared, it is offered with the following prayer:

"Offerimus—We offer to Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy mercy that it may rise up with a sweet savor before Thy divine majesty for our salvation and for that of the whole world."

This prayer is based on a figurative expression in the Old Testament. The odor of wine is its aroma, which ascends to Heaven as an odor of sacrifice.

Could the idea of a gift offering be more beautifully expressed? What words could more strikingly voice the wish that this gift ascend heavenward as a welcome offering?

The preparatory oblation is concluded with a summarizing prayer:

"In spiritu—By reason of our humble spirit and our contrite heart—we pray with the three young men in the fiery furnace—*let us be received by Thee, O Lord; and so may our sacrifice be offered up to Thee to-day, that it may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God."*

The final words of this prayer afford conclusive evidence that the oblation made was merely

preparatory. This is but the first part of the sacrificial action. Our sacrificial gifts are not yet pleasing to God.

The first part of this prayer may express the symbolism of sacrifice: we pray that we ourselves may be accepted by God. The second part implies that we cannot be pleasing to God except by an interior conversion from our sinful state.

The nature of the conversion required by the sacrificial gifts and for ourselves is not unknown to us, but up to this point the liturgy has not expressed it in precise terms. The prayers which follow state the nature of this conversion more plainly.

(B) THE PETITION ASKING FOR THE BLESSING OF THE GIFTS AND OF THOSE WHO OFFER THEM

The oblation of the gifts and the petition asking God to accept them express the fact that these gifts have been prepared on the altar for a sacrificial purpose. Since they are not pleasing to God in their present state, the preparation of the sacrifice contains in its second part a petition for their sanctification. This petition

recurs in the most varied forms until the consecration, which marks the true sanctification of the gifts.

The Petition Asking God's Blessing on the Gifts

"Veni—Come, thou who makest holy, almighty and eternal God, and bless this sacrifice, which is prepared for Thy holy name."

This prayer is a fervent appeal to the Holy Ghost, the source of all holiness. By His co-operation the Word was made flesh in the womb of the Virgin and became man. Only through His co-operation can the God-man become present upon our altar and convert our gifts into His flesh and blood. The Eucharistic dove, which was the ciborium of ancient times, is a monument made of precious metal, which reminds us that in the early ages of Christianity the Holy Ghost and the Eucharist were always closely associated.

This prayer does not yet tell us whether, as in the Old Testament and in all other religions, the consecration of our sacrificial gifts is merely moral, that is, effective in the juridical order, or whether it is physical, as in the Sacraments

of the New Law. It is to be noted, however, that medieval theologians and liturgists apply the term *"benedicere"* (to bless), which occurs in this prayer, to the Eucharistic consecration whenever they treat of the Last Supper or of the Eucharist. In their view this term evidently expresses a physical consecration.

In the solemn High Mass the sacrificial gifts, the altar, and all those who offer the sacrifice, are *incensed* after the prayer *Veni Sanctificator,* to express in words and ceremonies the symbolism of sacrifice. The rising incense symbolizes our prayers, and hence ourselves.

The first prayer at the incensation is a petition for God's blessing. The priest makes the sign of the cross and says:

"May God deign to bless this incense and to receive it for a sweet savor."

While incensing the offerings, the priest prays:

"Let this incense, which Thou hast blessed, arise to Thee, O Lord, and let Thy mercy descend upon us."

This prayer expresses the same idea as the sacrifice: a gift is prepared, its blessing and sanctification asked, and the petition for the union of the blessed gift with God added in

order that we may be blessed by Him. The two following prayers voice our desire of being elevated to and united with God:

"Let my prayer, O Lord, arise as incense in Thy sight, and the lifting up of my hands [*my prayer*] *as the evening sacrifice. . . . May the Lord enkindle in us the fire of His love and the flame of His everlasting friendship."*

Since this follows the petition asking God's blessing on the sacrificial gifts, they declare that the main object to be attained through the sacrifice is not only the blessing and consecration of the gifts, but also our own sanctification and union with God.

The same thought is once more expressed,—negatively by the symbolic *washing of hands,* and positively by the recitation of the 25th psalm, which was later inserted into this part of the liturgy:

"Lavabo—I have come in my innocence; redeem me and have mercy on me."

The next prayer explains more definitely the nature of the consecration of the gifts:

"Receive, O most holy Trinity, this offering, which we make to Thee in remembrance of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ."

What we offer, therefore, is not any kind of sacrifice, but that sacrifice which Christ commanded when He said: "As often as you do this, do it for a commemoration of Me." Our sacrifice is offered also in honor of the Saints, whose intercession we ask, in order that God may graciously receive both our gifts and ourselves.

The Secret Prayer

This prayer, which concludes the preparation of the sacrifice, is older by centuries than the Offertory prayers that precede it. For a long time it was the only prayer said during this part of the sacrificial action. As far back as we can trace it, it was always said in a low voice. Historical evidence does not allow us even to conjecture the reason why. The long introductory formula, which exceeds by far the usual *"Let us pray,"* shows that special importance was attached to it. The wording of the introduction varied in former centuries, *e. g.*, "Pray for me brethren," or "Pray for me, brethren and sisters, that . . ." All these formulas presuppose that the priest alone recited the following *Secreta.*

"Orate, fratres—Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty."

The faithful answer:

"May the Lord receive the sacrifice at Thy hands, to the praise and glory of His name, to our benefit, and to that of all His holy Church."

The Secret Prayer changes from day to day. As already indicated, this prayer expresses the same idea as the other prayers contained in the preparatory portion of the sacrificial action. They are merely developments of the Secret Prayer, which asks for the acceptance and blessing of the gifts and of those who offer the sacrifice.

Why is this petition repeated so frequently?

In the first place, this petition is the most important and comprehensive in the whole Canon, for it asks for benediction and sanctification. The greater the blessing, the oftener the Church asks for it in her prayers. Now in the Sacrifice of the Mass we have a unique blessing of the highest importance.

It might be objected that the Church, in administering the Sacraments, is sure that her petitions will be heard because Christ has promised to hear them.

This brings us to a second psychological reason, which is objectively, perhaps, more profound than the first. When Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, He publicly prayed to the Father to grant His petition. This prayer was not offered because Christ was uncertain whether He would be heard. He Himself justified His prayer by these words: "Father, I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people that stand about have I said it" (John xi, 42). So far as God is concerned, the consecration alone would be sufficient to constitute a sacrifice, for it contains all essential elements. But besides honoring God, the sacrifice is intended to elevate and perfect us. We also, who offer the sacrifice, are to be consecrated and sanctified; but this end cannot be obtained without our personal co-operation, as William of Auvergne (d. 1249) rightly says. Priest and people who offer the sacrifice are to be elevated by it to that love which makes us pleasing to God.

The liturgy is not intended as a beautiful play of symbols; its purpose to effect a real union of the soul with Christ. Since love for Christ is an activity of the soul, it develops by degrees. If the soul values this union with Christ as a

desirable good, it will spontaneously and frequently express its longing for Christ. Conversely, nothing is so well adapted to confirm and intensify the desire for any good, as the repeated and explicit wish to possess it.

As previously explained, the liturgy presupposes that those who offer the Holy Sacrifice are in the state of grace. But does not the soul in this state already possess that union with Christ which, we say, is to be perfected by the Holy Sacrifice? Alexander of Hales (d. 1245) answers this question by saying that the union of the soul with God, considered as an act of love, is not only *capable* of being indefinitely increased, but entails an unlimited *desire* of being increased.

However ardently man may love God, he remains a limited being with "innumerable sins, transgressions, and failings" in his daily life, with a natural and moral weakness due to his earthiness, and surrounded by interior and exterior dangers to the supernatural life of the soul. If he is borne aloft by a desire for moral heroism and perfection, he may be debased in a moment by vicious inclinations and passions.

Even if the soul steers tranquilly and directly towards perfection, she always remains aware

that she is only on the way to her goal. Such a soul, more than others, will experience a more lively impulse toward God, a stronger desire for perfection and holiness. If an unselfish love for Christ leads this soul to forget herself, if the conscious possession of Him overwhelms her with bliss, her love knows no bounds. She desires only to surrender herself more completely to Christ, to assimilate herself more perfectly to Him, to communicate every good she may possess to Him. She desires Christ only, and ever more intensely. "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the ideal of him who loves God. The daily act of oblation in the Holy Sacrifice affords him a welcome opportunity of realizing this ideal more and more. Every faithful Catholic can, therefore, attain that union with Christ which is the aim of the liturgy.

At the close of the preparatory part of the Mass we find ourselves standing before God as earthy men bearing material gifts and feeling deeply our weakness and poverty. Nature and precept impel us to offer a gift of homage to the Lord of the world, but we and our gifts are unworthy of Him. Hence we lift up our eyes to Heaven and ask God to bless and sanctify us

and our gifts, to elevate us to a better state and make us a more valuable gift.

Then we suddenly remember that we are not merely "of the earth, earthly," but Christians, the Lord's brethren, members of His body, redeemed by His Sacrifice on the Cross, elevated to the rank of children of the heavenly Father by His grace. Not only does Nature command us to offer gifts and sacrifices, but we have the precious commission to renew the sacrifice of Him who calls us His brethren. Thus our prayer of petition becomes one of thanksgiving, and our sacrifice, too, is invested with the same character.

II. THE CONSECRATION

(A) THE PREFACE

As has been repeatedly stated, in the liturgy the sacrificial action, properly so-called, which consists of the offering and of the sacrificial conversion, takes place entirely in the form of blessing and consecration. The similarity of the grouping of ideas and of the external ritual of the sacrificial action with those of other blessings and consecrations of the Church has also been pointed out. The Consecration of the

Mass, like that of other rites, is couched in the form of a "preface." Hence it is quite natural, from the liturgical point of view, that the Canon, or fixed rule of the sacrificial consecration of the Eucharist, should begin with the *Preface,* and not with the *"Te igitur."*

To prove by ancient Christian testimony that this conception was that of the early Church, would take us too far afield. It will be sufficient to recall St. Augustine's exposition [11] of the structure of the Mass. He says that "the sanctification of the sacrificial gift of God" (*"sanctificatio sacrificii Dei"*) begins with the *"vere dignum et iustum est"* of the Preface and ends with the "Amen" preceding the Lord's Prayer. The Gelasian Sacramentary (which dates from the sixth or seventh century) implies the same view when it says: *"Incipit canon actionis* [*i. e., gratiarum actionis*]*: Sursum corda . . ."*

Whether the Preface be regarded as an introduction, or foreword, as St. Cyprian and the second *Ordo Romanus* understand it,[12] or as a solemn juridical or liturgical formula, in

[11] *Sermo* 229.

[12] See Batiffol, *Leçons sur la Messe,* 8th ed., Paris, 1923, pp. 169, 191, 236. I have taken over several historical items regarding ancient Christianity from this instructive booklet.

which sense Livius uses the term, in any case the canon of the Consecration clearly begins with the Preface. Furthermore, in form and origin as well as in content, the Preface fits into the structure of the sacrificial action and can be regarded as a foreign element only from the point of view of a particular theory. Our judgment in this matter must not be influenced by the print of the Missal or by the initial letter T of the *"Te igitur,"* which has been expanded into a full-page engraving of the Crucifixion.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

"The Lord be with you.
And with thee.
Lift up your hearts!
We have lifted them up unto the Lord.
Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.
It is meet and just.
It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation,
That we should at all times and in all places give thanks. . . ."

The Canon, or Prayer of Consecration, begins with the priestly greeting, which is

followed by a call to attention. The faithful should raise their souls and desires to Christ, their head in Heaven, as St. Augustine says. They assure the priest that his wish has already been fulfilled. Next follows a request to render thanks to God, which the faithful acknowledge as their duty. Then the priest develops the motives which should inspire us to give thanks to God at all times and in all places.

The motives of thanksgiving are usually taken from the particular mystery of the life of Christ that corresponds to the season of the ecclesiastical year. The Preface generally indicates a definite way in which we are to give thanks, namely "through Christ our Lord." Through Him alone can we render thanks to God worthily and becomingly. He alone is the "way" by which praise, thanksgiving, and petition reach the Father, for He alone is the Mediator between God and man. The Angels also praise the Father through the Son. If we will praise God, therefore, we must join in the praise of the Angels, and with them intone a hymn to God's holiness and majesty. If we will offer to God a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we can do so only through Christ,

who alone offered a sacrificial gift that is worthy, holy, and in all respects pleasing to God.

Thus, while the Preface may at first sight appear to lack connection with the Sacrifice, a careful consideration shows that there are several points of contact.

It has been said that the Oriental and ancient Christian liturgies stress the idea of thanksgiving much more strongly than does the Roman liturgy. This is undoubtedly true if we consider only the wording of the liturgical prayers. The ancient liturgy contains a lengthy prayer in which God is thanked for the benefits of creation and preservation, and for His provident guidance of mankind, so touchingly described in the Old Testament, for the benefits of the Redemption in all the details of the life of Christ, and for the institution of the most holy Sacrament of the Altar.[13] The liturgies of St. Chrysostom and St. Basil have the same general structure as the Roman liturgy, but the development is not obvious, but hidden beneath the constantly recurring prayer of thanksgiving for the varied benefits of God,

[13] See Casel, *Das Gedächtnis des Herrn in der altchristlichen Liturgie* (*Ecclesia Orans*, Vol. 2).

and the prayer for fresh favors. It is quite true, therefore, that thanksgiving in these liturgies stands in the foreground of the Mass.

Yet, objectively, the Roman liturgy presents the same phenomenon. The Mass is conceived primarily as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The essential character of sacrifice is thanksgiving to God by making a return to Him for His many gifts, as the Catechism of the Council of Trent says,[14] and the Preface, as the Solemn introduction to the Consecration, plainly states that we wish to *thank* God by our gifts.

The *Ordo Missae,* especially in the Secret Prayer, frequently repeats that the sentiments of praise and thanksgiving demand expression. St. Augustine explains the words "Let us give thanks" as follows: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,—a great mystery in the Sacrifice of the New Testament."[15] The Gelasian Sacramentary begins the *"canon actionis"* at the Preface, and according to Batiffol this expression is to be understood as "gratiarum actio." Hence the phrase *"infra actionem,"* which is still found in our missals (at the *Communicantes* on feast days), means

[14] Pt. II, Ch. 4, Q. 53.
[15] *Ep.,* 140, 48.

"within the act of thanksgiving." To show the spirit in which the early Christians celebrated this Sacrifice, it may be added that because the joy of thanksgiving predominates in the Mass, the custom of celebrating Mass in the evening, which had been general in early times, was retained later on for fast days, so that the fast, and the penance which it implied, might be concluded before the Mass began.

Hence we are justified in understanding the words of the Preface, "Let us give thanks," directly of the Eucharistic thanksgiving. This interpretation is the more justified, because in the words immediately following, the Preface stresses the fact that we intend to give thanks "through Christ our Lord," and also because the words of the Sanctus, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," direct our minds to Christ entering Jerusalem for the great sacrifice of the Redemption.

In the Roman liturgy, therefore, our thanksgiving is contained, not so much in words, as in the *act* of thanksgiving. Thus the Roman liturgy agrees completely with the other liturgies in renewing Christ's sacrifice of thanksgiving at the Last Supper.[16] Only in

[16] "He gave thanks," Lk. xxii, 17.

this interpretation has the *"Te igitur . . . per Iesum Christum filium tuum Dominum nostrum . . ."* a clear sense as a connecting prayer. Because we desire to render thanks through Christ our Lord by presenting a gift to God, "therefore we pray through Jesus Christ" that God may accept and bless our gifts.

The hymn extolling God's holiness [17] was surely not inserted in this place by chance, for here is the beginning of the Consecration of the sacrifice in which God communicates of His holiness to our sacrificial gift. He does it in no stinted measure, for the gifts are to be converted into Him who is greeted with the words, "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord."

There is a wonderfully poetical play in the liturgy. Leading thoughts are set down in a few forcible words, and then enshrined in an artistic masterpiece of symbolism. Here attention is directed to the Consecration. We are not definitely informed wherein it consists, until just before the act itself. There are only indications, some of them easily recognized, others dimly suggested in mysterious allusions. The result of the Consecration is mentioned, but

[17] *"Holy, holy . . ."* (Is. vi, 3).

not *as* a result; the Consecration itself is characterized, but so as to render it intelligible only to the initiated.

To one who lives with the sacred liturgy, it tells a thousand things which the stranger does not learn. Like a bride, the liturgy reveals her deepest secret only to her beloved. But even to him she does not confide it at once in all its clarity and depth. The privilege of constantly discovering new excellences awakens the happy consciousness that the deepest depths have not been sounded and cannot be fathomed.

Each faithful Christian knows that a mystery awaits him. Its name is familiar to him. For since the Sacrifice of the Redemption, there is but one sacrificial gift that is wholly acceptable to God, namely, the human nature of Christ. If our sacrifice is to be acceptable to God, therefore, it must be sanctified in an unusual way by being converted into Christ.

According to another well-founded view the mystery is even greater. No act of oblation is pleasing to God other than that performed by Christ on Calvary. Hence this historic act must be rendered present. Our offering must be united with this act by the fact that we appear before God as members of the mystical

body of Christ. This is the secret. Every Christian knows of it, but it is veiled from our eyes. Only the friends of Christ taste its savor, according to the degree of their love for their Lord, and the measure in which He reveals His secret to them.

According to the liturgy solemn silence should obtain after the *Sanctus,* in order to signify the mysterious nature of the Consecration. The custom of silent prayer in this part of the Mass seems to go back to the pontificate of Innocent I (401–417). According to Batiffol,[18] it owes its origin to the Greeks, whose piety moves more in the forms of reverence, and who even to-day perform their sacrifice behind the iconostasis (picture-wall).

(B) THE PRAYER ASKING THE CONSECRATION OF THE SACRIFICIAL GIFTS

(From the *"Te igitur"* to the *"Quam Oblationem"*)

"Te igitur—Therefore, most merciful Father, we, Thy suppliants, do pray and beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord, to accept and bless these gifts, these offer-

[18] *Leçons sur la Messe,* p. 209.

ings, this holy and unblemished sacrifice. We offer them up to Thee first for Thy holy Catholic Church. . . ."

We ask God to bless the sacrificial gifts through the mediation of the Redeemer. The deeper meaning of His mediation just at this part of the sacrifice is apparent from the preceding explanations. The motives of this prayer are the purposes of the sacrifice; they are so many reasons moving God to grant our petition. They are summarized in the petition for the Church, the mystical body, whose head is Christ. This is an all-inclusive point of view, which eminently appeals to God because of the interests of His Divine Son.

We offer the Sacrifice in Union with Christ and ask God to Bless it

At this point we notice a peculiar rubric. According to the ancient *Ordines Romani,* the pope (bishop, priest) alone performed the sacrificial act. We are approaching that part of the sacrifice in which the priest takes the part of Christ Himself; he speaks momentous words in the name of Christ and as His representative, and performs an act which reaches to Heaven

itself. We should expect, therefore, that he will lose sight of the faithful assembled and occupy himself exclusively with his office as representative of Christ.

In a manner the priest does separate himself from the people, for he speaks in a subdued voice and performs his acts in silence. Yet the liturgy nowhere expresses so strongly the unity of priest and people, and of all the faithful with each other and with Christ in His mystical body, as in this part of the Canon. Lest we gain the impression that the faithful are merely represented by the priest in the act of sacrifice, and may, therefore, now occupy themselves with their own ideas and private prayers, the priest both before and after the Consecration repeatedly states that he sacrifices for them, and they sacrifice together with him. "For them do we offer, or they do themselves offer up to thee this sacrifice." "Accept this offering, which we, thy servants [the clergy], and thy whole household do make unto thee." "Wherefore, O Lord, we thy servants, as also thy holy people . . . do offer unto Thy most excellent majesty of thine own gifts. . . ."

Certain persons have accustomed themselves to juridical fictions to such an extent that they

regard as usual and natural that which is permissible only in extraordinary cases, and even undertake to justify the principle that the priest should say Mass without the participation of the faithful, even though they are assembled about the altar. How differently the Church thinks and speaks in the Missal and the Council of Trent.

The blessed consciousness that all the children of grace constitute a *united community* is emphasized by the liturgy just before the sacrificial gifts are converted into the Body of Christ.

The Church Militant takes part in this sacrifice in order to thank God and to petition Him for herself and all her members on earth. The Church Triumphant participates in this sacrifice, for her intercession is asked to obtain the consecration of the gift which is offered in thanksgiving for the honor God has conferred upon her. The Church Suffering in Purgatory cannot take an active part in the sacrifice, but it is offered as a petition for her ultimate glorification in the Lord.

In the Sacrifice of the Cross the "Lamb" chose "a bride" [19] and joined Himself with her in wedlock. Wherever this sacrifice is re-

[19] Apoc. XXI, 9.

newed, she and all her children are present; for they all have been purchased by the Blood of the Lamb.

Hence we sacrifice *"for the whole catholic Church"* in general, in order to obtain *"peace, protection, unity, and guidance"* for her *"in the whole world."* We sacrifice for the hierarchy of the Church, *"for our pope and our bishop,"* and for all faithful children of the Church.

Liturgically speaking, the *Memento* for the living is a paraphrase of the purpose for which the sacrifice is offered, rather than a prayer for certain persons. It mentions those who participate in a special manner in the sacrifice because they have contributed the sacrificial gifts (given the Mass offering), or those whom the priest desires to commend to God in a special manner, and

"all here present, whose faith and devotion are known unto Thee. For them do we offer, or they do themselves [conjointly with the priest] *offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise for them and theirs; for the redeeming of their souls; for the hope of salvation and* [bodily] *well-being."*

Since we offer sacrifice in order to obtain these ends, and reasonably expect our petitions

to be granted through the Consecration, we naturally cast about for those who will aid us and intercede for us. None are more capable of aiding us than those who are united with us in the same communion and have already attained that blessed union with God which we desire to obtain through this sacrifice. During their life on earth they frequently offered the same sacrifice and through it became sacrificial gifts in Christ, which are pleasing to God. They gave their lives as witnesses to the faith and to the greatness of this sacrifice. In this heroic sacrifice of their lives they imitated the sacrifice of Christ and received at once the reward of final union with him.

This is the sense of the *"Communicantes—Mindful of our communion . . ."* Mindful of our union with these witnesses to the faith, the Mother of our Redeemer, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and all the Saints of God, we offer sacrifice and ask the Consecration because of our union with them.

The Poor Souls in Purgatory are not mentioned in this prayer, because they cannot contribute to realize the sacrifice. But they are mentioned later, when we turn from the petition for union with God, which this sacrifice is

to obtain for us, to the ultimate union with God in Heaven.

The Prayer Asking the Acceptance of the Gifts

The perspective of our offering has gradually been enlarged. The priest began with the words, *"I, unworthy servant, offer unto Thee."* Then the faithful who came for the sacrifice joined in his prayer. According to the liturgy, they were originally conceived as representing the diocese (parish); but they are aware of their union with the whole Church and with the Blessed in heaven. All participate in their own way in the sacrifice which is about to be offered on the altar. They constitute a numberless choir of souls, praising God and paying homage to Him,—a vast family of men, related to one another through the grace of adoption as children of God. Though the Angels do not participate in our sacrifice as such, their homage to God and their love for Him never cease. We know, therefore, that we are united also with them.

Can a father leave the petition of his children unheard, especially when its object is his own honor and their welfare in union with him?

Inspired with this confidence, we repeat the petition that God may accept and sanctify our gifts, by summarizing all the symbolic meanings and purposes of sacrifice in the following prayer:

"Hanc igitur oblationem—We, therefore, beseech Thee, O Lord, to be appeased and to receive this offering, which we, Thy servants, and Thy whole household, do make unto Thee; order our days in Thy peace; command that we be rescued from eternal damnation and counted within the fold of Thine elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Then follows the express petition for the complete and perfect sanctification of the sacrificial gifts, for their conversion into the Body and Blood of Christ. This petition is repeated in various terms, like a juridical formula in which the meaning is made clear beyond the possibility of doubt:

"Quam oblationem—This offering do Thou, O Lord, we beseech Thee, deign to make in all respects blessed, approved, valid, conformable, and acceptable. May it become for us the body and blood of Thy dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."

The content of this text we found already in

Ambrosiaster.[20] The *"Quam oblationem"* asserts in clear terms that bread and wine are our sacrificial gifts, and that we pray for their consecration and sanctification in order that they may be acceptable to God. First, the aim of the Consecration is paraphrased, but quite distinctly stated even in the paraphrase. That which is in every respect consecrated is incapable of further sanctification; it must be God Himself. A sacrificial gift which is in every respect approved by God and acceptable to Him must be, or must become, Christ, the victim of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The early Christian apologists stated that only Christ is the truly valuable, or "spiritual" sacrificial gift, as opposed to the material gifts of the Jews and pagans. The present prayer expresses this in the words, *"May it become for us the body and blood . . . of Jesus Christ."*

Medieval writers found a welcome opportunity of explaining the symbolism of sacrifice in the words "become for us," found in this prayer. They say that if *we, too,* become the Body of Christ, the sacrificial gift of the Mass becomes *for us* the Body of Christ. Just as this gift becomes the true Body of Christ, so

[20] *Supra,* p. 98.

must we become His mystical body. All this is to be effected through the Consecration.

(c) THE ACT OF CONSECRATION

(*"Qui pridie"*)

The wording of the form differs in the various Sacraments. In some it consists in the mere statement of what takes place, *e. g.,* "I baptize thee . . ."; in others it takes the shape of a petition, *e. g.,* "Through this holy unction . . . may God forgive thee"; in others again it appears as a solemn Preface, as in Holy Orders and the Eucharist. Even the essential words, on which everything depends, are not always expressed in the same manner. In the Consecration of the Holy Eucharist, for example, the validity of the rite depends upon the recitation of the historical account of the Last Supper with the intention of consecrating; or, more precisely, on the words, "This is my body, this is my blood."

The conversion of our sacrificial gifts into the sacrificial gift of Christ through the Consecration is effected by the following words, to which Christ has attached this miraculous effect

when they are rightfully pronounced by the priest:

"Who, the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up to Heaven, unto Thee, O God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this,—FOR THIS IS MY BODY.

"In like manner, the supper being finished, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, again giving thanks to Thee, He blessed it and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take and drink ye all of it, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT, A MYSTERY OF FAITH, WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY, FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

"As often as you shall do these things, you shall do them in memory of Me."

As the liturgy alone is under discussion here, *i. e.*, the manner in which the Church in her ceremonies and prayers portrays the objective effect of the Consecration, all dogmatic questions connected with the Consecration may be passed over. They have been sufficiently explained in our previous discussions as far as they are

necessary to understand the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is sufficient to recall the fact that the Consecration, as the conversion of the sacrificial gifts, contains everything required for the Sacrifice of the Mass. As we have shown elsewhere,[21] the liturgy itself, by the manner in which it utilizes the account of the Last Supper, testifies that Christ offered a true sacrifice at the Last Supper.

Here we are interested only in the question, what position the Consecration and the account of the Last Supper occupy in the liturgical structure of the Mass.

The answer is found in the text of the Consecration formula and in its effects. The text of the Consecration, as contained in the liturgy, only states that Christ took bread, and, giving thanks, blessed it and gave it to His disciples to eat as His body. Hence the effect of this action is a blessing of the bread by which it is converted into the Body of Christ. The corresponding fact is stated in the second part of the Consecration, in which the blood of Christ is termed a sacrificial gift: *"Blood of the new and eternal testament, which shall be shed for*

[21] Kramp, *Opferanschauungen der römischen Messliturgie* [2] (1924), p. 92.

you and for many, for the remission of sins." The text does not say that Christ on this occasion made an oblation.

Tradition, the other source of Revelation, teaches that the Consecration is an act of sacrifice, since it renews the Sacrifice of the Cross by again offering the sacrificial *gift* of that Sacrifice, nay, making the sacrificial *act* of that sacrifice present again.

We offer the same sacrifice which was offered at the Last Supper, and the priest repeats the actions of Christ even to the last detail, intending to do what Christ did, according to the Lord's command.

If we closely study the account of the Last Supper, we shall observe the same sequence of acts that is found in the Canon of the Mass up to the Consecration.

Christ took the bread into His hands; this corresponds to the preparation of the sacrifice in the first part of the sacrificial action. Giving thanks, He blessed the bread; this is the Consecration, which the Preface explicitly characterized and announced as a thanksgiving, —not as an act of thanksgiving followed by the Consecration, but as an act of Consecration and oblation which constitutes an act of thanks-

giving to God. The blessing by means of the words of Consecration constitutes or effects the Consecration, *i. e.,* the conversion of our gifts into the Body and Blood of Christ. They are present on the altar as converted and blessed sacrificial gifts, just as they were present at the Last Supper, and are to be considered as nourishment, for they are present under the appearances of bread and wine and are explicitly offered to us by Christ that we may consume them. This fact is to be noted. Food and table luxuries are everywhere used as sacrificial gifts. The liturgy even after the Consecration continues to regard the sacrificial gifts as food and drink.

According to the liturgical ceremonies which accompany the Consecration to-day, it is the culmination of the Mass even from a purely external point of view, as indicated by the solemn silence usually observed only for this brief interval, by the elevation and adoration of the Lord, and by the ringing of the bell. Liturgically, however, the climax of the sacrificial action has not yet been reached. In former times this was externally apparent in the Mass, for the Consecration was performed in the same silent and inconspicuous manner as the prayers

and ceremonies which surround it. The elevation of the Sacred Host was introduced about the year 1200, probably to counteract Berengarius' denial of the Real Presence. It is certain that the sole purpose of the elevation is to bring the sacramental Christ before the eyes to the faithful, so that they may greet Him with acts of faith and devotion. The elevation of the Chalice was introduced in the fourteenth century for the sake of uniformity. The genuflection of the officiating priest is first attested in the year 1500 and was not prescribed until the reform of Pius V. The ringing of the bell must be of very recent date, for it was unknown to Burkhard (1501) and Indutus Planeta (1507).[22]

[22] Which posture of the body is most appropriate during Mass, and especially during the Consecration? The priest stands during the entire sacrificial action. St. Chrysostom considers a standing position so closely connected with the idea of sacrifice that he infers that Christ does not exercise His priesthood in Heaven, from the fact that He *sits* at the right hand of the Father. The liturgy assumes the standing position of the faithful, for it speaks only of *"circumstantes."* Our sense of reverence commands us to kneel at the Consecration. The Church desires that we direct our gaze to the Eucharistic Christ, hailing Him with joy, for He is the sacrificial gift for which we longed, and our only Mediator with God. Hence the indulgenced prayers granted by Leo XIII and Pius X.

In the liturgical structure of the Mass the Consecration is merely the blessing of the sacrificial gifts. There is a twofold consecration, but it does not influence either the structure of the sacrificial action or the order of thought. No text suggests such an influence. The significance of the double consecration was discussed above [23] in connection with the Offertory. After the Consecration the sanctification of the sacrificial gifts and of the persons offering them is an accomplished fact, but the liturgical action continues.

III. THE FINAL OBLATION

The event so fervently prayed for and expected with so much longing has come to pass: our gifts have been converted into the sacrificial gift of the Sacrifice of the Cross; Christ is present as a sacrificial gift on the altar.

An atmosphere of relieved suspense and confident satisfaction pervades the mysterious words of the prayers which follow. We now have a gift which God is sure to accept, a gift which is an intrinsically worthy thanksgiving for all His benefits. We are now in a special

[23] *Supra*, p. 108.

manner members of Christ's mystical body. Since we are united with Christ, we are assured that we shall be accepted with favor by the Heavenly Father.

Hence the act of oblation still continues, and we are approaching its climax. Liturgically considered, this part of the Mass is the final and absolute offering, since it offers the converted sacrificial gift. The final oblation takes place in three steps: the offering, the petition, and the prayer for acceptance. These three phrases express the content of the triple prayer which follows the Consecration:

"Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed passion of the same Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, His resurrection from the dead, and His glorious ascension into Heaven, do offer unto Thy most excellent majesty, of Thine own gifts bestowed upon us, a clean offering, a holy offering, a spotless offering, the Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.

"Deign to look upon them with a favorable and kind countenance, and to receive them as Thou hast deigned to receive the gifts of Thy

just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our Patriarch Abraham, and that which Melchisedech, Thy high-priest, offered up to Thee, a holy sacrifice and spotless gift.

"We humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, to command that these offerings be borne by the hands of Thy holy angel to Thine altar on high, in the sight of Thy divine majesty, that so many of us as by this partaking of the altar shall receive the most holy Body and Blood of Thy Son, may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

These prayers are the *climax of the sacrificial action.* This conclusion follows from the order of ideas in the liturgy: the preparation and offering of a worthy gift for the enjoyment of God (symbolizing the preparation and offering of ourselves), which we have sought from the Offertory on, is finally accomplished in the third of these prayers. The ancient writers on the Mass agree on this point.

The interchange of gifts, which is expressed in these prayers, proclaims the mutual love between God and man. In the Offertory we present to God the best gift in our possession. In the Consecration God presents to us the best

of His possessions in return. We again make an offering to God of His return gift (*"of Thy gifts bestowed upon us"*), the best of our gifts and of His own. The gift which God made to us in the Consecration was given to us in order that we might be able to give to God. Having received this return gift from us, God presents to us a second gift for our nourishment. He invites us, so to speak, to His table in the sacrificial repast. This explains the allusion to Holy Communion at the end of the third prayer after the Consecration.[24]

The third prayer after the Consecration is remarkable for the plasticity of its ideas. It represents God after the manner of a man, sitting at His altar in Heaven. At our altar here on earth we offer Him *"the holy bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation"* for His enjoyment. If the food we offer is pleasing to Him, He sends His Angel to bear it aloft to Him. The food *is* pleasing to God, and we know He will accept it, for it is the sacrificial gift which He has already accepted once for all from His Son, as the gift reconciling all mankind.

[24] This explanation is taken from Hugh of St. Victor, d. 1141.

God has accepted this gift, and He will accept it again and again. It has not been out of His possession since He first received it. Christ, whom we now offer to the Father, is always with Him. But why, then, do we ask God to send His Angel, that he may bear Christ aloft to Heaven? This question is asked by many ancient theologians, and all give the same answer, full of childlike faith and simple piety:

We offer Christ to the Father as our sacrificial gift. Now this gift is a symbol of our own self, which it is our principal and fundamental desire to offer to God. Since Christ is present on the altar under the species of food and drink, He is also a symbol of ourselves, for He gives Himself to us as food and drink, the complete nourishment of man. Now we offer ourselves to God as a community. Hence the real Eucharistic Christ is a symbol of the mystical body of Christ, which consists of the members of this community.

Thus the symbolical character of the sacrificial gift is maintained throughout the entire course of the Mass. By the Consecration those offering the sacrifice have become in a special manner members of the mystical body of Christ. Therefore, *when we offer ourselves to*

God through Christ, we offer ourselves together with Him as one large unit. We desire to be united with God, just as our sacrificial gift is united with Him. This is the ultimate motive impelling men to offer sacrifice. Hence we take it as a matter of course that our petition will be granted, for through grace we are one with our Head,—living members of his Body.

The Prayer for Union with God

We have been united with Christ through the Consecration, and with the Father through the sacrificial oblation which we have performed. In the sacrificial repast of Holy Communion we are to be united still more intimately and enduringly with God. And even this union is merely the means and the preparation of our final union with God in Heaven. The Sacrifice of the Mass does not achieve this final consummation, but it directs our gaze toward it. The final words of the prayer already quoted, *"that we may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace,"* are realized only in our eternal union with God.[25]

The next two prayers unfold this auspicious

[25] Albert the Great.

prospect, which concludes the sacrificial action as such.

The union of all the faithful in the mystical body of Christ, and their eternal union in Heaven, suggest the memory of the suffering Church, *i. e.*, those members of Christ's mystical body who achieved union with Him on earth, but have not yet reached the goal of the final union in Heaven. In the first Offertory prayer the priest included these Poor Souls in his sacrifice. Since we have been mindful of the living in so much detail, we cannot fail to remember also the faithful departed in a special manner. In which part of the Mass could we remember them more appropriately than here?

The Memento for the faithful departed has been appropriately placed in this part of the Mass. They *"have gone before us"* [into eternity] *"with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace."* But they have not yet reached their goal, and therefore we pray for them, that they may reach *"the place of* [eternal] *refreshment, light, and peace."*

"We sinful servants" also desire to attain this goal. The *"Nobis quoque"* requests this final union with God for us. Before the Consecration we asked the Saints, especially the Apostles

and Martyrs, to aid us in obtaining the consecration of our sacrifice and our sacrificial union with God; now we ask of God to *"grant us some part and fellowship with Thy holy apostles and martyrs . . . and with all Thy saints,"* and ask Him to admit us to eternal bliss.

The Memento is followed by a kind of peroration, which is a recapitulation of the entire sacrificial action: *"Through Christ, our Lord, through whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us these gifts."*

The sign of the cross, which is made over the sacred species three times in the middle of this prayer, points to the Eucharistic Christ and, consequently, can refer only to the Eucharistic Consecration. The words at which the sign of the cross is made are also used to designate the Consecration of the sacrifice. The words, *"which thou dost create,"* naturally refer to the creation of bread and wine, the gifts which are sacrificed. The words, *"dost give to us,"* designate the gift of Christ's body and blood which God makes to us in order that we may offer it, or, perhaps, to Holy Communion, or to both.

The praise of the Most Holy Trinity, which

concludes the sacrificial part of the Mass, is accompanied with solemn ceremonial:

"Through Him, and with Him, and in Him,[26] *is to Thee, God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory. For ever and ever."*

The sign of the cross, made thrice with the Sacred Host over the Chalice, is a symbol and memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross, at the completion of which the Blood of Christ flowed from His Sacred Heart.

The sign of the cross is then made with the Host before the Chalice when the names of the Father and Holy Ghost are spoken. These divine persons are one with Christ, yet they are not the God-man, though they both have contributed their share to consummate the Sacrifice of the Cross.

Hence both the Host and the Chalice are elevated as an expression of homage by the Eucharistic Christ and His whole mystical body to God the Father, to whom the entire sacrificial offering was directed.

The faithful, by answering *"Amen,"* assent to the sacrifice and express their participation in it.

[26] Cfr. Rom. 11, 36.

The offering of the sacrifice is now completed. It opened with the words, "Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God . . . through Christ, our Lord," and it concludes by stating the ultimate reason of this kind of thanksgiving in this kind of sacrifice: through Christ all honor and glory is given to God.

B. THE SACRIFICIAL REPAST

1. *The Meaning of Holy Communion as a Sacrificial Repast*

The sacrificial repast naturally follows the offering of the Sacrifice. As God, so to say, sits at table receiving the sacrificial food, so the sacrificer also desires to partake of this food, in order that he may receive from God a pledge of the reconciliation and friendship which he sought to obtain through the Sacrifice.

"The sacrificial meal belongs to the sacrifice. It is the richest fruit and, one may say, the fullest reward of sacrifice. Having been reconciled with God through the sacrifice he has offered, man is the guest of God at the sacrificial meal. The sacrificer partakes of the gifts offered to God, and accepted and sanctified by Him. By doing this he enters into the most

intimate communion with God." Those who partake of the sacrificial meal "consume divine food, and by so doing attain that union with God which is the aim of the sacrificial action." This is the "fundamental idea" of all religions regarding the relation of sacrifice and sacrificial meal.[27]

This is the reason why the sacrificial meal, considered as table communion with the Divinity, follows upon most sacrifices. This meal is so closely connected with the idea of sacrifice that a portion is offered to the gods at nearly all banquets, and often also at the beginning of an ordinary meal. Neglect of the gods might incur their wrath. It was customary also to offer the first draft of the cup to the gods. In Israel the first-fruits of all crops had to be given to God. In the desert the slaughter of all animals seems to have been connected with sacrifice, because their blood had to be brought to the tabernacle as an offering for Jahve. The first Christians had difficulty in obtaining food, especially meat, which had not been offered to the gods. Thus we find everywhere a connection between sacrifices and meals.

Christ stressed this connection at the Last

[27] Thalhofer-Eisenhofer, *Handb. d. kath. Liturgik*, II, 194.

Supper. The paschal lamb was sacrificed and eaten as *sacrificial food.* The Lord gave His Body under the appearance of bread with the words, "This is my Body, which is given [sacrificed] for you," and His Blood with the words, "This is the Blood of the New Testament, which is shed [sacrificed] for you."

It follows that Christ instituted Holy Communion as a sacrificial repast. He had already promised it as such when he said: "The Bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." [29] The food of souls which He announced in these words is His flesh, which was sacrificed for the salvation of the world, that is, sacrificial food. St. Paul speaks of the same connection between sacrifice and sacrificial repast, and adds the idea of table-communion with God: "The Chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not communion with the blood of Christ? And the Bread which we break, is it not communion with the body of Christ? Since there is only one bread, we are one body, though we are many; for we all partake of the one Bread. Behold Israel according to the flesh: are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" He warns his readers against

[29] John vi, 52.

idolatry and concludes with the words: "I will not that you be in communion with the devils. You cannot drink the Chalice of the Lord and the chalice of the devils. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of the devils." [30]

For St. Paul, just as for Christ, to partake of the Eucharist is to partake of a sacrifice, to eat sacrificial food, table-communion with God; and, therefore, like the sacrifice itself, a most solemn profession of faith. The union of the sacrificer with God, which is the end symbolically sought and attained through the offering of sacrifice, is effected in a new and profound manner through the sacrificial repast. The Israelites and pagans merely possessed a sanctified sacrificial food; we Christians are in immediate communion with God, for we consume the Eucharistic God as food for body and soul.

The liturgy of the Mass considers Holy Communion only as a *sacrificial repast.* We consume that which was offered to God. We sit at table with God, because we partake of the Eucharistic Christ, whom we offered to God as a sacrificial gift.

[30] 1 Cor. x, 16 ff.

To the priest saying Mass all this is self-evident and does not need to be inculcated by ecclesiastical ordinances. But it must be made plain also to the faithful that the Holy Eucharist is a sacrificial repast intended for all who assist at Mass. This follows from the fact that, according to the liturgy, the faithful are co-sacrificers in the true sense of the word. "As co-sacrificers, who in ancient times brought the bread and wine for the sacrificial action, *the faithful have a claim to the sacrificial repast.*" [31] It is not surprising, therefore, that the prayers of thanksgiving after Holy Communion (*Postcommunio*) apply not only to the priest, but to all the faithful. They presuppose the communion of *all* those present at Mass and are unintelligible from any other point of view. Medieval and modern liturgists have called attention to this fact and inferred from it that the faithful should *communicate in the Mass,* not at some other time.

The distribution of Holy Communion at any other time except immediately after the communion of the priest, that is, during the liturgy of the Mass, was utterly unknown in the Church until the late Middle Ages. Conse-

[31] Thalhofer-Eisenhofer, II, 196.

quently Holy Communion was considered only as Sacrificial Communion. The distribution of Holy Communion outside of the Mass seems to have been introduced in the thirteenth century, when the Mendicant Orders endeavored to promote the reception of this Sacrament among Christians who had been lax in their duty. They did not attain their object, but the new practise became a wide-spread custom, which was finally recognized by the Church in the form of a special liturgy for the distribution of Holy Communion outside of the Mass.

It is an instructive fact that the religious innovators of the sixteenth century waged bitter war against everything that bore the name of, or was connected with, sacrifice. They included Holy Communion among their objectives because it was sacrificial. Even Catholics were influenced by the Protestant attitude. Many who remained true to the faith recoiled from sacrificial communion. They wanted to communicate, but not to assist at Mass; they wanted to receive the "Lord's Supper" after the manner of Protestants, but would have nothing to do with sacrifice and sacrificial communion. A contemporary account states that in Bavaria the people "would rather have lost everything, nay,

suffered death itself, than receive Holy Communion during Mass."

Confronted with these errors, Catholic leaders naturally tried to restore the ancient customs. St. Charles Borromeo admonished his clergy to retain the custom of Sacrificial Communion. St. Peter Canisius was unusually successful in explaining the Sacrifice of the Mass to the faithful, and inducing them to receive Holy Communion at Mass.

What is the attitude of the Church, who is entrusted with the guardianship of the faith, on this matter?

The Council of Trent treats the question in its decree on the Sacrifice of the Mass, not in that on the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Council says: "The Holy Synod would fain indeed that, at each Mass, the faithful who are present should communicate, not only in spiritual desire, but also by the sacramental participation of the Eucharist, that thereby a more abundant fruit might be derived to them from this most Holy Sacrifice; but not, therefore, if this be not always done, does it condemn as private and unlawful, but approves and therefore commends those Masses in which the priest alone communicates sacramentally;

since those Masses also ought to be considered as truly common [worship]."[32] This decree clearly distinguishes between the rule to be followed in principle, and the exception admitted. Sacrificial Communion is to be the rule.

The Roman Ritual, which contains the ordinances for the priestly functions performed outside of Mass, first gives the rubrics for the distribution of Holy Communion outside of Mass, and then adds: "The *communion of the people* should take place *in the Mass* immediately after the communion of the priest (though it may take place occasionally *after mass* if there are reasonable grounds), because the prayers which are said after the Communion in Mass concern not only the priest, but also the others who communicate." Even when Holy Communion is distributed without any external connection with the Mass, the priest should wear a stole of the color prescribed for the vestments of the Mass of the day, not the white stole prescribed for other Eucharistic functions. Furthermore, though only one person communicates in the Mass, the prayers are

[32] Sess. *22*, ch. 6.

said in the plural number, as though this one communicant represented all the people.

The prayers and rubrics of the Missal know of no other Communion of the faithful except that immediately after the Communion of the priest.

The new Code of Canon Law makes the connection between Sacrifice and Communion stand out conspicuously. It enunciates the principle that "in the most Holy Eucharist Christ the Lord is contained, offered, and received." [33] In matters of detail the following ordinances are given: "Any priest may distribute Holy Communion during Mass, and if he says Mass privately, also immediately before and after Mass." [34] The same canon states that if the priest says Mass for a congregation of the faithful, or in their presence, he may distribute Holy Communion *per se* only during Mass. This ordinance is supplemented by another: "The faithful should be encouraged to strengthen themselves with the Eucharistic Bread frequently, and even daily, according to the regulations given by the Apostolic See; and

[33] Canon 801.
[34] Canon 846.

if they assist at Mass, to communicate not only in spiritual desire, but also by sacramentally receiving the most Holy Eucharist after due preparation." [35] The directions on the instruction of the faithful regarding the Holy Eucharist make it apparent in what measure the Church considers this sacrament as sacrificial communion. The faithful are to be instructed and encouraged to assist at Mass on weekdays, and frequently to visit the Blessed Sacrament. No mention is made of the reception of this Sacrament, because it is implied in assistance at Mass. In the light of this teaching we understand the order that Holy Communion may be distributed at any place [36] and time [37] at which Mass may be said, and on Holy Saturday either in Mass or immediately after it.[38]

The Church could hardly express herself in clearer terms. She lays it down as a principle that Holy Communion is Sacrificial Communion in the Mass, but does not refuse to provide for practical necessities. In 1922 the diocesan

[35] Canon 863.
[36] Canon 869.
[37] Canon 867.
[38] Canon 867.

synod of Cologne expressed itself in the same sense: "The participation of the congregation in the sacrificial repast after the Communion of the priest is an ancient Christian custom, which should be revived wherever circumstances permit."

Unfortunately this idea has faded from the minds of many Catholics. Owing to the stress of outward circumstances, it may be necessary to distribute Holy Communion outside of Mass; but this practise tears Holy Communion from its natural setting. Wherever possible, therefore, it should be the exception, not to the rule, and should be given after Mass rather than before it.[89]

Many prayer books contain prayers which separate Holy Communion from the idea of sacrifice. It should be remembered that the Mass is not merely a preparation for Holy Communion, for Holy Communion centers about God, not about ourselves. Holy Communion is the culmination and natural conclusion of the sacrificial action. The sacrificial repast is a return-gift which God presents to us for the honor we have done Him by offering

[89] See Thalhofer-Eisenhofer, *Handbuch der katholischen Liturgik*, II (1912), pp. 356 f.

Him sacrifice; it is an honor which God confers upon us in return for our homage, like a banquet given by a sovereign to his guests in return for their homage. For this reason St. Paul terms Holy Communion "the Lord's Supper," [40] *i. e.*, a supper which the Lord gives to the assembly of His faithful ones.

From this point of view it is self-evident that those who assist at Mass should also partake of the sacrificial repast. Despite its name, Spiritual Communion is no substitute for Sacramental Communion in Mass, because it lacks the sacramental realization of the union with God symbolized by the Sacrifice and effected by Holy Communion. The Lord invites the faithful to a real, not to an imaginary repast.

In the light of these considerations one understands the desire of the Council of Trent that not only the priest, but, if at all possible, the faithful present also should communicate in the Mass. When no one communicates in Mass, one is reminded of the parable of the king, who vainly invited his guests to the banquet which he had prepared. The Catechism of the Council of Trent speaks of "robbing oneself of the greatest goods of Heaven" if one

[40] I Cor. xi, 20.

is able to communicate, but contents oneself with the mere desire for Holy Communion.

The best preparation for Holy Communion is indicated by the words of Pope Pius X: "Do not pray in Mass, but pray *the* Mass." Not any kind of prayer before Holy Communion, disjointed from the Mass as a sacrifice, is desired. The Mass prayers themselves and the greatest possible participation in the sacrificial action are wanted, for thus the connection established by Christ and willed by the Church is most effectively maintained.[41]

But is not the Holy Eucharist a Sacrament, and, as such, independent of Sacrifice? Certainly, the Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament;—it is the Sacrament of Sacraments, for it contains Christ, the Author of all grace. In all ages in the Church of God this Sacrament has been received outside of the Mass if the circumstances required it. But this practise does not destroy the intrinsic and divinely willed connection between the Sacrament and the Sacrifice. This connection determines the sentiments with which the Holy Eucharist should be received.

[41] Details in Kramp, *Opfermahl oder Kommunionandacht.* (*Stimmen der Zeit,* Vol. 102 (1921), pp. 202 ff.); *Eucharistia* (Freiburg, Herder) 1924, Ch. 4 and 6.

There are good grounds for the striking designation, *"Sacrament of the Altar,"* which is not an indication of origin, but expresses the nature of the Sacrament. The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrificial Sacrament.

Since the Holy Eucharist is a Sacrificial Repast, those who receive it are, so to speak, *guests at the Divine Table.*

The more exalted the station of the host, the greater is the honor he confers upon the guests whom he invites to his table. They must show themselves worthy of this honor by letting their thoughts and interests center about their host. These things are self-evident amongst men, but at God's Table many seem to follow other principles. Yet the welfare of their souls, which they so anxiously seek, can be found only in God, not in the exclusive consideration of their own souls. God, the Lord and Host, and Christ, the Food of our souls, should be the beginning and the end of all our thoughts in these moments. The soul should be filled with joyful thanksgiving and a sincere desire for the honor of God and the Kingdom of Christ.

This does not imply that petitions for ourselves are out of place, for the Kingdom of God includes our souls; but it is not proper that the

guest should be the center of interest at the Table of the Lord.

We are guests at the Table of God. In sacrificing, we offer Him gifts which communicate, sustain, and intensify life. In return, we receive from Him a Food of which He has said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Christ is life itself. He communicates, sustains, and intensifies life: "I am the living Bread, that has come down from Heaven." "I am the bread of life." "He that eateth this bread shall live forever." "Power went out from him and healed all." Christ communicates divine life, which consists in supernatural grace and the perfection of the state of adopted children of God, not in sentimental devotion and blissful rapture.

We are guests at God's Table. Only members of the family and close friends are admitted to the intimate family circle. "If any man love me, . . . my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our abode with him." Holy Communion is a repast of friendship, in which the Father serves the best gift of Heaven and earth. It recalls the meal which Christ prepared for His apostles on the night before He was to part from them, and

the mysterious meal which the risen Lord gave to His friends at the sea of Tiberias. Holy Communion is a repast of friendship in which Christ desires to renew and foster His friendly relations with the soul of man.

Since Holy Communion is a Sacrificial Repast, it also implies that we are *guests at table with our brethren who have received the same grace.*

Just as the offering of sacrifice is a common profession of the same faith and a common practise of the same religious exercise, so also Holy Communion has always been considered a token of membership in the same Christian community. The very word *"Communio"* indicates the union of all the faithful as members of the one mystical body of Christ. The words of St. Paul have already been quoted to the effect that since we all eat of one bread, we all are one body.

Since the faithful are guests at God's Table in Holy Communion, they should foster charity for one another. In a prophetic allusion to Judas the Psalmist considers it the greatest of crimes to turn one's heel against the person whose bread one has eaten.[42] Those who are

[42] Ps. xl, 10.

guests at the same table have regard for one another's weaknesses and are happy to render friendly services of charity to one another. They are united by having their highest interests in common; they show good will to each other and further each other's endeavors.

Who can forget the praise uttered in ancient times by pagan lips: "See how the Christians love one another?" The ultimate reason of this mutual charity is found in the fact that they "persevere in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of the bread, and in prayers." [43] They ate of the same bread and at same table, therefore they were "one heart and one soul." The practise of our parish societies receiving Holy Communion in a body is a striking example of the psychological effect produced when those who profess the same faith and are united by the same grace, partake of the Sacrificial Repast in the Mass.

On the preceding pages we have briefly explained the meaning of Holy Communion according to the liturgy, which expresses the mind of Christ, of His Apostles, and of His Church.

It was necessary to treat this question in

[43] Acts ii, 42.

connection with the Mass because these views are unfortunately almost unknown to the faithful to-day. Many consider receiving Holy Communion as a "devotion," which is left to the discretion of the individual. For the Church, however, it is an integral part of the Mass *for all.* In former times the Church stressed this part of the Mass to the extent of excluding from her communion all those who failed to communicate.

Some fail to find the notion of Sacrificial Communion in the liturgical ceremonies and prayers preparatory to Holy Communion. This point would not need to be explicitly mentioned in the liturgy, since it follows from the very nature of sacrifice. If the Mass is a sacrifice, Holy Communion is essentially a Sacrificial Repast. If it were not such, we should be compelled to assume that there is no Sacrificial Repast following the sacrifice of any religion in the world. Whoever understands the system of ideas which is the basis of the liturgical sacrifice, will recognize the communion liturgy as their direct continuation, tending toward the realization of the ultimate purpose of sacrifice, namely, man's elevation to God and union with Him.

2. *The Table Prayer of the Liturgy*

After the gifts have been prepared for the sacrifice, the sacrificial action begins with a "Preface." The table prayer of the liturgy of the Mass, and consequently the entire rite of the Sacrificial Repast, is also introduced by a Preface, though it has a somewhat different form:

"Let us pray. Admonished by saving precepts, and taught by divine instruction, we make bold to say. . . ."

This Preface is a reverent introduction to the prayer which the Lord Himself has taught us.

The pious Christian custom of saying grace before meals probably is connected with this liturgical rite. In the view of ancient writers like Strabo (d. 849), no less a person than St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, introduced the *Lord's Prayer* as the connecting link between the Consecration and Communion. The learned (*"scholasticus"*) author of the Roman Canon failed to imitate this model, for he joined the rite of Holy Communion immediately to the "Amen" which concludes the sacrificial action.

Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604) returned to

the ancient tradition, which St. Augustine attests for northern Africa and St. Jerome for Palestine, and restored the Lord's Prayer to its place in the Mass. He also took over from Christian tradition the introductory prayer quoted above, which is found in St. Augustine and probably in St. Cyprian (d. 258). He further enlarged the Our Father by the "Libera," which by its petition for peace and divine protection brings before us even to-day the distress of that period of the migration of nations, and the belief then prevalent that the end of the world was impending. In other liturgies the Lord's Prayer is recited by all the faithful together. St. Gregory seems to have followed the prevailing custom of the Benedictines, according to which the priest recited it alone.

It would take us too far afield to give a detailed explanation of the Lord's Prayer after the manner of the old theologians.[44] We will call attention only to a few points which are important for the explanation of the liturgy.

The liturgy repeatedly terms the assembly of the faithful "family" of God. God Himself is

[44] See Kramp, *"Vater unser,"* in the *Stimmen der Zeit*, Vol. 103, (1922), pp. 354 ff.

usually designated as "Lord" or "Father." Hence He appears in the liturgy as the head of a family. In virtue of the creation God is our Lord, for as creatures we are His servants. By reason of the Redemption, God is our Father, for through grace we become His children, and consequently, members of His family. Since the act of sacrifice is a service of homage and love, it is a plastic expression of the relation in which we stand to God. By making us conscious of our union with God and inviting us to His table, the act of sacrifice makes this relation more intimate. After the sacrificial action has been performed, all the faithful and the entire Church realize that they are assembled about their head as members of the great family of God. In the nuptial mass the nuptial blessing is conferred after the Our Father, because a new family has come into existence within the great family of God. In accord with the same general view the Lord's Prayer has been appropriately called the "Family Prayer" of the Church.

Hence when we approach the repast which the Father has prepared for us, we feel that we are children of God and members of His family. About whom shall our interests center,

and to whom shall our thoughts be directed? God Himself, through His only begotten Son, has supplied an answer of surpassing beauty to this question. We address Him,—we "make bold" (*audemus*) to address Him thus, because He Himself desires it so.

"Our Father, who art in Heaven." In this way God is distinguished from every other father and characterized as being in our midst, though His dwelling-place on high is the goal of our earthly pilgrimage. God is the Father of all, not only of those assembled about His table with us, but of all who eat the same bread at the same board throughout the world.

We speak to our Father primarily of His own interests. *"Hallowed be thy name."* The "name" is the essence of the invisible God, as far as it is outwardly manifested. Hallowing an object consists proximately in removing it from profane use, and especially in conferring upon it religious and cultual consecration and veneration. Since the Our Father a little further down mentions our ethical relations to God, the first petition voices our wish and our will to give to God the religious reverence, and especially the public worship, which is due to Him, by acknowledging and honoring Him as

the Lord of the world, the King and Father of men.

"Thy kingdom come." The kingdom, or reign of God is the active exercise of His royal government over men, which in the Old Testament was revealed in the form of theocracy, and in the New Testament consists in the Messianic Kingdom of Grace, or the Church of Christ. We live in this kingdom, and yet we pray for its "coming," for the reign of God, intended for all men, has not yet been accepted by all. It has not even reached all members of God's family, for the struggle for supremacy still continues in the hearts of the faithful and in public life. Finally, the reign of God is to come in its most perfect form at the end of human history, when the Son of Man will appear on the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty to justify and glorify the Father and His government of the world. Since all things merely prepare this day, our special interest and our prayers must be directed toward it.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." If the kingdom of God is to come, God's plans for its preparation and establishment must be carried out. His ordinances re-

garding faith and morals, public and private life, family life, the State, and the Church must be observed on earth with the same perfect outward conformity and inner devotion as in Heaven, where the very thought of not serving God is impossible.

These are the highest interests of God, our Father, and this fact alone should suffice to make them our own. This the more, since God's interests coincide with our own; for their success assures our welfare. Oftentimes they seem so exalted,—too exalted above all earthly things. Our own sphere of interests is so much narrower. Our aims are usually limited to the things nearest to us. Knowing this, God lovingly condescends to listen to his little ones and lends His attention to our anxious thoughts.

"Give us this day our daily bread." This petition expresses the most pressing care of most men. In recent years many to whom this petition was strange in former times have learned to appreciate it. The original text of this petition reads: "Give us this day our bread for to-morrow." What loving kindness on the part of our Lord! Lest our anxiety should unduly increase, He teaches us to pray

that we may have our sustenance to-day for the morrow.

There is also a daily bread of the soul, of which it may no more be deprived than the body may of its nourishment. The bread of the soul consists in spiritual nourishment and moral invigoration, but equally in the supernatural "Bread of Life."

By a fine etymological shading the Vulgate has translated the fourth petition in this sense with the words: "Give us this day our supernatural [*supersubstantialem*] bread." These words primarily designate the Eucharistic Christ, and who would doubt that this version of the fourth petition was one of the reasons why the Lord's Prayer was received into the liturgy? We have arrived at the Sacrificial Repast; we are about to approach the Holy Table to receive "the Bread of Life." What other sense can the petition for our daily bread have but that of a request that this food may find us worthy and become the nourishment of our souls?

Note that this and the following petitions are a community prayer: we ask for "our" bread, not for "my" bread. The consciousness that

we are God's family remains vividly present to us even in our most personal concerns.

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Man places his concern for his ethical life, his desire for the pardon of his sins, next after his anxiety for his physical life. "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or of hatred";[45] hence this petition is applicable to all. Everyone has his moral weaknesses; every one falls at least into lesser sins and negligences. St. Augustine says that the Lord's Prayer is said before Holy Communion because it obtains for us the remission of these lesser sins. The *pax,* which follows soon after the Our Father, puts the words "as we forgive" into practise.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen." The evils of the past were the subject of the preceding petition; those of the future are the object of the concluding one. Because of our weakness we desire to be preserved from trials and tests of our moral strength, for they are a serious danger to the life of our souls. We pray especially for strength not to succumb to temptations.

[45] Eccles. ix 1.

Whose thoughts do not turn to the Bread of Life, the Bread of the strong, when the strengthening of our moral powers is mentioned at the Table of the Lord?

It is apparent from these considerations that the liturgy intends to connect the Lord's Prayer in more than one sense with the Sacrificial Repast which is about to take place.

The *"Libera,"* which follows the Lord's Prayer, is an enlargement of the last petition. It owes its origin to the conditions prevailing in the world at the time of Pope Gregory the Great, but in its present form it has a permanent application. The noise of battle constantly sounds about the natural and supernatural life of individuals, nations, and the Church. Nothing is more necessary to all of us than interior and exterior peace.

"Deliver us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and by the pleading of the blessed and glorious Mary, ever Virgin and Mother of God, and of thy Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and of Andrew, and of all the Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days, that through the help of Thy mercy we may always be free from sin and safe from all trouble."

3. *The Breaking of the Bread and the Pax*

Probably no rite of the Mass differs so much in the various liturgies, and none has undergone so many changes in the development of the Roman liturgy, as the breaking and mingling of the Sacred Species, and the *pax* and blessing joined with it. This is not the place for even a summary discussion of these variations. We are interested only in the ideas underlying these ceremonies, especially in their relation to the sacrifice and the sacrificial repast. This rite contains three leading ideas: the unity of the Christian sacrifice in time and place, the union of the faithful with one another and with Christ as members of His mystical body, and peace as the fruit of this union and a preparation for Holy Communion.

1. The Unity of the Christian Sacrifice in Time and Place.—In the breaking of the bread, as everywhere, the endeavor of the liturgy is to invest rites which owe their existence to practical needs, with a symbolical character, and to utilize them for symbolical purposes. At the present time it is customary to consecrate many small hosts in order to obviate the neces-

sity of breaking a larger one, which would consume considerable time. Formerly the breaking of the bread was necessary in order to distribute the Holy Eucharist to the communicants. To-day it has only a symbolical meaning. The symbolical breaking of the bread was customary in the ancient Roman Mass, and it is an older custom than its breaking for the purpose of distribution.

We marvel to-day at the attention given to the empty paten, especially at High Mass. It seems to be a reminiscence of earlier times, for we know that a particle of the host consecrated on the previous day was preserved and reverently held in a pyx by two acolytes,[46] or placed upon the altar,[47] and at this part of the Mass put into the chalice to signify that the sacrifice of to-day is the same as that of yesterday.

On certain days another particle was sent by the bishop to the churches subject to him and to neighboring bishops, to signify that the sacrifice is the same in all places. The bishop received a similar token from other churches and put it into the chalice at this part of the Mass.

[46] Ordo Romanus I.
[47] Ordo Romanus II.

In order to make this unity stand out more strongly as a symbol, a part of the Host consecrated in the sacrifice just performed was put into the chalice. Only this last mentioned custom, the conclusion of the symbolic rites signifying unity, has been preserved to us. Perhaps the three signs of the cross which are now made with the particle within the rim of the chalice are a reminiscence of the three particles received in ancient times. The symbolic idea deserves to be borne in mind, for it is an important part of the great expression of the unity of all Christians set forth in many ways by the Mass.

2. The Union of the Faithful with One Another and with Christ as Members of His Mystical Body.—This is the second and, according to all indications, the more important idea underlying the practise of the churches in sending to one another a particle of the Consecrated Bread. It is based on the Pauline idea that we all eat of one bread, and hence are all one body in Christ. The particles sent to other churches were termed "leaven" (*fermentum*), because they united the faithful with the bishop in the one body of Christ and filled them with His love.

This rite is no longer in use in the Roman

liturgy. But since the days of Amalar (d. 850–854) another rite is interpreted in the same sense. The large host is broken into three parts, which have been constantly and unanimously regarded through the centuries as symbols of the three parts of the Church, or,—which is the same thing,—of the three parts of the Mystical Body of Christ. This rite, therefore, is a symbol of all the children of grace in Christ.

3. Peace as the Fruit of this Union and as a Preparation for Holy Communion.—The brief word, "peace," expresses the fulness and extent of the grace of Redemption. It was the first greeting of the risen Christ to his Apostles. "Peace be to you." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Thus the ancient Hebrew salutation of peace, which expressed the wish of all temporal welfare, was completed and expanded in a unique manner. According to the desire of Christ, "Peace" was to be the Apostles' word of greeting when they entered a home: "Peace be unto this house."

For St. Paul "peace" was the sum of all good things which he offered to the faithful in the name of Christ. "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." "May the

peace of Christ, unto which you have been called so as to form only one body, reign in your hearts." On the graves of the catacombs "Peace" is the expression of the eternal union of the departed with Christ and the Father. "Peace" is the motto of the sons of St. Benedict, as the expression of exterior peace and the proper balance of the love of God and of man. "Peace" under all these aspects is the wish of the Church in this part of the liturgy.

The desire for peace is expressed in various ways in the Mass. At the end of the *"Libera,"* peace is asked as opposed to war and subversion, anxiety and sin. It is asked also in the petition, *"Give us peace!"* in the third *Agnus Dei.* When the priest traces the sign of the cross three times over the chalice, with the particle which is to be placed into it, he wishes the faithful "the peace of the Lord." The mingling of the Sacred Species symbolizes the unity of the Sacrifice. From this one Sacrifice of the Cross, which is indicated by the sign of the cross,—its threefold repetition is either symbolic or pleonastic,—the "peace of the Lord" proceeds and is to be communicated to all the faithful. The solemn episcopal blessing, which now follows in many liturgies and for a time

was given also in the Roman liturgy, expresses the same idea in another way. The peace of the Lord also implies peace among ourselves as brethren in the Lord. Hence in olden times the kiss of peace was given here. In later times it was changed to the wish, "Peace be with thee," the embrace being retained.

This is a truly grand sequence of ideas. The renewal of Christ's Sacrifice of Redemption is concluded, and the one great family of God is assembled around the Table of the Lord. The words, *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,"* are like a legacy of the Master. His sacrifice has restored to us peace with God. It has made us brothers, and thus put us at peace with each other. It has given us that precious good which the world seeks in vain. May we preserve this treasure by maintaining our connection with its Source, and retain the brotherhood into which we have been admitted.

The liturgy bids us comply with the wish of Christ by wishing each other from our hearts the peace of Christ and peace with one another. When the consciousness that we are members of a common brotherhood has been thus revived in us, the repast at the Table of the Lord becomes a true repast of peace and joy. The

Lord, who is the Host at this repast, has the satisfaction of knowing that His guests are worthy of Him. Christ, the nourishment of souls, finds them prepared to receive His strength and life.

In the *present Roman liturgy* everything in this part of the Mass has been reduced to the shortest possible form. During the concluding formula of the *"Libera," "through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,"* the Host is broken into three parts,—a symbol of the three realms of the one Church, and hence of the communion of all the children of grace in Christ. Placing two of the parts on the paten, the priest with the remaining particle makes the sign of the cross three times over the chalice, saying: *"The peace of the Lord be always with you,"* to which the faithful answer: *"And with thee."* Then the priest puts the particle into the chalice, saying: *"May this mingling and hallowing of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ avail us who receive it unto life eternal. Amen."* This symbolizes the unity of the Sacrifice.

The words: *"this mingling and hallowing,"* are clear in the light of the preceding exposition. They cannot be intended as a ceremony of immediate preparation for Holy Communion,

because in ancient Christian times the Pope spoke them only after the communion of the holy bread. The word *"consecratio"* cannot be understood of the sacramental Consecration in the conversion of the sacrificial gifts, because they mention a consecration which takes place together with *"this commingling."* Hence they are to be understood in the wider sense of a special blessing [48] and are best translated by: "this blessed commingling. . . ." The blessing consists in the commingling as a symbol of the unity of the Sacrifice, and in the fact that the Sacred Species so commingled are a pledge of eternal life to the recipient because they communicate to him the graces of the Redemption, which are also designated in the wish of peace.

The threefold *"Agnus Dei"* forms the conclusion of this part of the Mass. It was introduced by Pope Sergius (687–701) as a chant to be sung during the breaking of the bread for Holy Communion. Because of the beauty of the idea expressed by the *Agnus Dei,* it was retained even after the practise of breaking the bread had been discontinued. In addressing the Eucharistic Christ as *"Lamb of God,"* the

[48] See Du Cange, *s. v.* "Consecratio"; *"dominici corporis et sanguinis consecratio"* stands for *"commixtio."*

liturgy once again assures us that Christ is present as a sacrificial gift, and as such is consumed in the Sacrificial Repast.

4. *The Consumption of the Sacrificial Repast*

Until the year 1200 Holy Communion followed immediately upon the breaking of the bread. But just as various prayers were inserted between the *"Libera"* and the Communion, according to the conditions of the times, so the custom of saying special prayers of a purely personal character in preparation for Holy Communion became established in the private Masses of the monks. The three prayers which the Roman liturgy contains in this place are first found in their present form and sequence in the writings of Alexander of Hales (d. 1245). They appear separately as early as the eleventh century, sometimes as prayers after Holy Communion. To-day they retain their character of preparatory prayers, which of course may be said by lay people as well as by the priest.

"Lord Jesus Christ, who didst say unto Thine apostles, peace I leave to you, my peace I give

unto you; look not upon my sins, but upon the faith of Thy Church; and deign to grant her peace and union according to thy will."

This prayer continues the petition for peace. Perhaps it originated on the occasion of the deep-going controversies between the Latin and the Oriental churches and their eventual separation. Whatever its origin, it is a most beautiful prayer, for it expresses the unselfish identification of one's personal interests with the interests of the Church. The person praying begins by asking peace for himself. As he prays, the communion of the Church, whose child he is, arises before his mind. Under the influence of this idea he becomes unmindful of himself, and continues to pray only for the Church.

In the liturgy of the present day the kiss of peace (embrace) is given after this prayer in the solemn High Mass. It begins with the celebrant and is given to all. Thus the *pax* is characterized as the peace of the Lord, which is communicated to all. About the year 1200 this ceremony was in use in every Mass, and was considered by the faithful as a substitute for daily Communion, which at that time had fallen into desuetude.

"Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the will of Thy Father and through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost didst by Thy death give life to the world, deliver me by this Thy most holy Body and Blood from all my transgressions and from every evil; and make me always cleave to Thy commandments, and never suffer me to be separated from Thee."

"Let not the reception of Thy body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, though unworthy, presume to take, turn against me unto judgment and condemnation; but through Thy loving kindness may it avail me for a safeguard and healing remedy for my soul and body."

Three more short prayers follow; then the priest receives Holy Communion under the species of bread. The taking of the chalice is introduced by two brief prayers.

Then the *communion of the faithful* takes place. For several centuries it was preceded by special prayers, corresponding to the prayers of the priest before Communion. These introductory prayers were inserted in this place as a rite for distributing Holy Communion outside of the Mass. They occur in the rite for distributing Holy Communion in Mass in a Dominican *ordo* of the thirteenth century and

have been explained as a summary of the whole Mass because they begin with the *Confiteor* and the absolution, which are recited also in the beginning of the Mass. It seems more correct to regard them as an expansion of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, corresponding to the *Libera.* St. Augustine connects that petition with the preparation for Holy Communion.

When distributing Holy Communion in earlier times, the priest said: *"The Body of Christ,"* and the communicant answered, *"Amen."* To-day a longer prayer is said, namely: "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen."

The psalm which in ancient times was sung during the distribution of Holy Communion, has been abbreviated into an antiphon, the so-called *Communio,* which is recited or sung after Communion has been distributed.

The Sacrificial Repast is now finished. Christ, the sacrificial gift, has become our nourishment. Union with God, which is the purpose of all sacrifice, has not only been attained symbolically in the sacrificial action, but

has become a sacramental reality through the Sacrificial Repast. Each of the faithful is a Christ-bearer, a God-bearer. All are united with Him, and He is united with all. Thus all are one, and we have the true Mystical Body of Christ,—the one Vine. The words of the liturgy continue to echo in every soul like the sound of music that has ceased, according to the individual capacity of each soul.

Christ has become one with us. In Holy Communion, as in the sacrificial action, our thoughts pass from the sacrificial union to the eternal union of the individual and of all Christians with God in Heaven. For according to the liturgy the union achieved in this Sacrament is a figure of the union which takes place in Heaven; it is "a pledge of future glory." Hence the Church recites this beautiful prayer after communion:

"Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a clean mind; and from a temporal gift may it become for us an everlasting remedy."

The utensils of the Mass are now placed in order, and the prayer after the repast is said in the *postcommunio*. This prayer is different

in every Mass; usually it is a petition for strength enabling us to use in our practical life the graces received, or it elevates our gaze from the sacramental union just achieved to the perpetual union with God in our eternal home:

"May thy Sacraments, we beseech Thee, O Lord, perfect in us what they contain, that we may receive in truth what we now accomplish in a figure." (Ember Saturday in September.)

"Grant us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that [in the life everlasting] *we may have the full enjoyment of the Godhead, which is foreshown by our receiving Thy precious Body and Blood in this life."* (Corpus Christi.)

After the priestly greeting the faithful are dismissed: *"Go, you are dismissed."* On special days of prayer the words, *"Let us praise the Lord,"* are said instead of the formula of dismissal. They leave it to the faithful to continue still longer in prayer. The priest then says a concluding prayer, asking God to regard the entire sacrificial action with favor, and blesses the faithful as a pledge of the divine blessing upon their day's work.

"May the performance of my liege duty be pleasing to Thee, O Holy Trinity; and grant

that the sacrifice which I have offered all unworthy in the sight of Thy majesty may be received by Thee and win favor from Thy mercy for me and for all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

CHAPTER V. THE LITURGICAL NOTION OF SACRIFICE AND CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

Offering oneself to God is the essence of the liturgical notion of sacrifice. Sanctification is its peculiar form and character. Gifts which sustain and increase life are offered to God and sanctified by being withdrawn from profane use and brought near to God. In the Eucharistic Sacrifice they are endowed with an unsurpassed degree of sanctification and an unparalleled measure of assimilation with God, for they physically become the God-man himself, the Eucharistic Christ.

Man offers himself to God in these gifts, not by surrendering his separate existence, but by elevating himself and placing himself into God, as it were. Deep down in his soul are rooted the yearning and the impulse of being liberated from himself, of reaching a higher level, a divine plane of existence. Like everything in nature, man's whole being struggles upward to participate in the eternal and imperishable.

The conscious activities of his soul seek to rise above the vicissitudes of his daily life and to participate in the thought, the volition, and the being of God's life. Sacrifice is the ladder by which he ascends to the land of his longing. He well knows that he loses nothing by giving himself to God, but is elevated, sanctified, and made like to God. More than this, he is united with God and, in a mystical sense, deified.

Deep down in his heart man realizes his insignificance and his need of being completed by a superior being. He knows likewise that, by leaning for support upon the infinite God, and being assimilated with Him, he can become truly great. Sacrifice points the way to true supernatural greatness attainable by all.

Through sanctifying grace, which is a real entity, the Christian religion confers upon man participation in the Divine Nature. Like a vital principle, sanctifying grace makes for action; it desires to rise to the new heights of divine life disclosed by revelation.

There is only one tree on which the frail ivy of man's nature can climb to these divine heights. It is the Tree of the Cross, on which the God-man has opened to all the gate to a divine nature.

There is only one power which enables man to scale these heights: the power of the God-man, which He communicates in a mysterious way to all that love Him. The twig must be grafted on the vine which is Christ. Man must become a living member of that organism which St. Paul terms the Mystical Body of Christ; then the stream of strength can make its way into the human soul.

This strength is conveyed to man by the Bread of Life, which is the Eucharistic Christ Himself.

How can we obtain this Bread? Only in return for a sacrificial gift; only by travelling the road which leads through the Sacrifice of the Cross, the sacrificial gift of which is communicated to us in a wonderful manner according to the will of Christ. Considering our lives under this aspect, we become rich by giving ourselves to God. We are elevated by surrendering ourselves to Him.

Man ascends the heights of Heaven by offering sacrifice. The entire life of his soul is elevated into the sphere of the Divine Life. To sacrifice is to know, confess, and acknowledge God through faith: *"I offer unto Thee, my God, living and true," "through Christ our*

Lord, Thy Son." To sacrifice is to trust in God's goodness and help: *"Wherefore, most merciful Father, we pray and beseech Thee to receive and bless these our gifts."* To sacrifice is to perform a service of love for our divine Lord: *"We do offer unto Thy most excellent majesty of Thine own gifts bestowed upon us a holy and spotless offering."*

The worship of sacrifice, says St. Thomas, arises from the love of God as from a spring, and enkindles love like a firebrand. Love is surrender, exchange, and assimilation; love is happiness in giving oneself and receiving another. To sacrifice is to sink into the depths of Christ's love, to become transfused by the fire of His spirit, to become united with His nature, and then to devote oneself in and with Him in holy service to the Father. In Christ the Father accepts us, and thus the object of the deepest yearning of the human heart is fulfilled. We are near to God, united with Him, one with Him. We live a Divine Life, and hence eat a Divine Food, the Bread of Life.

The liturgical idea of sacrifice essentially implies consecration to God, the devotion of man's life to God, and the conferring of divine life upon man. What further argument could be

desired to prove the dominating position which sacrifice occupies in the life of a Christian? The notion of sacrifice is an epitome of the Christian religion and of the entire religious and ethical ideal of life.

This fact prompted St. Paul to designate a saintly Christian life as a sacrifice, a preparation of the body for a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.[1] For the same reason St. Augustine terms works of mercy performed for God's sake a sacrifice in the sense of offerings made to God in the person of one's fellowmen. He says: "Every good work which is done in order to be united with God in holy union, is a true sacrifice." [2] According to St. Augustine the whole company of the Saints in Heaven is an eternal sacrifice, because they all consecrated themselves to God during their earthly lives and have now attained supernatural union with Him, which is the object of sacrifice, to praise God as an eternal sacrificial gift. In a word, to offer sacrifice in the sense of the liturgy means to realize the ideal of Christian holiness.

The individual does not live isolated in the world. He is placed within the circle of the

[1] Rom. xii, 1.
[2] *De Civ. Dei*, x, 6.

lives and duties of his fellowmen. Christ, our Lord, designates benevolent, unselfish, considerate, helpful love as the perfection of our relations towards our fellowmen. Now there is no more perfect way of entering upon this love and progressing in it than that which is proposed for us in the liturgical idea of sacrifice. All those who have been born again of the grace of Christ are brothers, not only in name, but in reality. They know that they are one in Christ;—all assemble about the same altar; all eat at the same table of God; all partake of the same nourishment; all continue to be throughout their lives what they have become at the altar. In this aspect also, offering sacrifice in the sense of the liturgy is the realization of the ideal of Christian holiness in oneself.

Christianity is a religion of redemption, but not in the sense of merely possessing the promises of God and a well founded hope, like the Mosaic religion in the Old Testament; nor in the sense of despair and longing, of the greatest possible renunciation, and of self-redemption by surrendering one's separate existence and being dissolved in Nirvana. Christianity is a religion of redemption because it is in possession

of Redemption, recorded in its Sacred Books as the historical fact of the reconciliation of mankind with God through Christ, and because it places the fruits of this Redemption at the disposal of all men.

This is the "glad tidings," the Gospel announced by Christ. "This is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." "He that believeth in Me *hath* everlasting life." This is the glad tidings proclaimed by the Apostles to all mankind: "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. It is God's gift, not of works . . . Christ is our peace . . . He has broken down the dividing wall . . . Through Him we have access to the Father." [3] Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be children of God."

All, therefore, who have accepted the faith in Baptism *are* redeemed, incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ, children of God, brethren of Christ, and heirs of Heaven. Hope for the kingdom of glory still lives, and in

[3] Eph. II.

this sense the Apostle has truly said: "We are saved by hope"; [4] but this hope is built upon the conviction that we are in very truth the children of God.

We are redeemed, but our Redemption was accomplished in Christ and through Him. In Christ we live. Only so long as we remain branches of the Vine,—as Christ has termed Himself,—have we eternal life in ourselves. We live the life of engrafted olive branches, to quote a comparison of St. Paul, not a life belonging all to ourselves. We are members of His body, not an independent organism. "Through Him, and with Him, and in Him" we live the life of the redeemed. The effect of sanctifying grace, which is an entitative principle building us up as living temples of the Holy Ghost upon the foundation which is Christ, extends by logical sequence also to the conscious life of the faculties of our soul. The religious life of mind, will, and feeling can have no higher aim than that which St. Paul expresses in the profound words: "I live, but no longer I; it is Christ that lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son

[4] Rom. viii, 24.

of God, who loved me and gave himself to death for me." [5] Our religious life can have no higher aim than that which the parting wish of Christ inculcated upon the Apostles: "Abide in my love."

One who loves does not torture his soul with doubts, hesitation, and fears; he lives in joy, and gratitude, and looks forward to a bright future.

Thus St. Paul calls upon his Christians to "rejoice in the Lord." "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." [6] "Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. Speak to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. Give thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." [7] "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. For this is God's will in Christ Jesus concerning you." [8] "Admonish one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing in your hearts to God in grace. All that

[5] Gal. ii, 20.
[6] Phil. iii, 1; iv, 4.
[7] Eph. v, 18.
[8] 1 Thess. v, 17 f.

you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through him." [9]

The Lord himself calls upon us: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven." [10] The Prince of the Apostles exults in the words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has begotten us again unto living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, which has been reserved in heaven for you." [11]

Further texts of the same import might be quoted. The entire New Testament is a Testament of joy, thanksgiving, and hope; a Testament of the devotion of God to man and of the heritage of devotion to God by those who have been redeemed by Christ.

The liturgical notion of sacrifice constantly urges us to practise and foster just this kind of holiness, which is essential and proper to the Christian religion and constitutes its glory and its excellence over all other religions.

[9] Col. iii, 16 f.
[10] Mth. v, 12.
[11] 1 Peter i, 3.

The words "through Christ our Lord" contain the underlying motive of all liturgical actions, words, and chants. They are the impelling thought at the Holy Sacrifice. Of ourselves we are nothing; in Christ we are everything. In themselves our gifts are worthless before God; converted into the Body of Christ, by His divine power, they are the most precious of all gifts. Hence all our endeavors are directed toward the one aim of bringing Christ upon our altars as a sacrificial gift. The object of all our solicitude is that we may be made perfect in Christ and be received more and more closely into the spiritual union of His grace, so that after the consecration we may thankfully say: "We now offer unto Thee of Thine own gifts bestowed upon us a clean, holy, and spotless gift, the bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation."

Through Christ we give thanks, praise, and adoration. Through Christ and in Him we offer our gifts and our love. In Christ we are a community of children of grace; in Him we offer sacrifice as a community and sit at the family board of our Heavenly Father. In Christ, therefore, the liturgical notion of sacrifice has its origin and its culmination, its per-

fect realization and the prospect of eternal union with God in Heaven.

Appreciation and gratitude are the first duty of the redeemed. Man is little inclined to be grateful. Is it because gratitude is an acknowledgment of his dependence upon God? Is it the fear of realizing that he possesses a gift and an excellence, which would incline his soul to overweening self esteem? Is it anxiety lest gratitude prevent him from receiving further benefits from God? Is it selfishness thinking only of itself instead of the Giver and Lover of his soul? Perhaps the reason is found in all these motives together. The fact is that we are invariably desirous of receiving, that we constantly voice new requests and petitions, that in our prayers we are concerned altogether too much with ourselves instead of occupying our minds with God. How little this attitude measures up to the standard of our religion, and how far it falls short of the ideal set forth in the Sacred Books!

How far, too, this attitude is removed from the Christian idea of sacrifice! Abashed and confused we stand before the Lord of Heaven and earth with our poor gifts and our being weighted with earth, asking to be accepted,

praying for blessing and sanctification. At this very instant the liturgy directs us to intone a hymn of thanksgiving and joy. How is this possible, and how is it justified? "Through Christ our Lord."

The same motive which, after the confession of the excessive weakness and sinfulness of man, and after the utterance of that heart-rending cry for liberation, impelled St. Paul to go over so suddenly to sincere thanksgiving, moves us in similar circumstances to proceed from a prayer of petition at the altar of the Lord to a prayer of thanksgiving, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."

Just as St. Paul desired to communicate to others the rich treasures of his soul, and did not consider it presumption "to supply those things which are wanting of the sufferings of Christ," so also the liturgy asks us to give, not to poor abandoned men, but to the Lord of Heaven and earth. Our offering to Him is not to be made in self-satisfied condescension, but in grateful and joyous worship, as befits His redeemed children, acknowledging with joy the divine treasures which the giver of all good confers upon us.

From whatever point of view we consider

the Sacrifice of the Church, it implies devotion to God in and through Christ.

If we spread the treasure of the mysteries of salvation before our eyes, we find that no part of it is lacking upon our altars. If we unfold the ideals of Christian holiness before our souls, and consider the directions and paths by which they lead us to God, we see that their aims and their realization loom up in the course of the Holy Sacrifice and are brought into the fullest measure of actual existence possible on earth in the sacrificial repast which unites us with Christ. From these towering heights we peer into the realm of God's glory and fame.

Imbued with these ideals we will repeat unceasingly in the sanctuary of God:

> "I will go in unto the altar of God,
> To God, who is my joy from my youth."

In this spirit we will renew the sacrifice of thanksgiving:

> "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God . . .
> Through Christ our Lord."

THE END

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